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## The Conservative Party in the European Parliament 1973-1992

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# **The Conservative Party in the European Parliament 1973-1992**

Khurram Jowiya

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

King's College London

Political Economy

## **Declaration**

This thesis represented my own work. Where the work of others is mentioned, it is duly referenced and acknowledged as such.

Khurram Jowiya

25 November 2019

## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the relationship between the British Conservative Party and the European Parliament. It will address three interlocking matters. First, it will examine the conduct of Conservative Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in the European Parliament. It will show the difficulties they faced in their dealings with the largest centre-right grouping in the European Parliament, the European People's Party (EPP). The thesis will contest the limited existing literature on Conservative MEPs which suggests that the two groupings struggled to work together because of differing ideological perspectives and religious orientations. It will instead argue that lukewarm relations were created because of differing opinions on key issues such as the European Parliament presidency election in 1982, and poor personal relationships between the two sets of MEPs. A decisive stage in the development of the relationship between the two came in 1992 when the British Conservative MEPs ceased in their efforts to operate their own centre-right grouping and joined the EPP. However, it will be shown that the merger between the two groupings was only achievable because of very fortuitous circumstances, indicating that the EPP was not a natural fit for the British Conservative MEPs.

Secondly, the thesis will examine the relationship between Conservative MEPs and the domestic British Conservative Party, including its leadership and its Westminster representatives. MPs at Westminster consistently feared the possibility of MEPs undermining their role. Yet the thesis will argue that MEPs generally maintained relations with the Conservative leadership in this period, during the tenures of Edward Heath, Margaret Thatcher and John Major. Thatcher, particularly, was pragmatic and willing to work with the MEPs in key areas such as her efforts to achieve a partial rebate of the UK financial contribution to the Community. Thatcher enjoyed collaborative working relationships with

certain MEPs throughout her time as Conservative leader. At times during this period, some British Conservative MEPs did perceive a division between themselves and the British Conservative leadership and became disillusioned when they felt they were unable to work with the Conservative Party leadership or government departments when the party was in office at UK level. Nonetheless, as will be seen, Thatcher and Conservative MEPs interacted often at least until 1988 when she began to shift towards an increasingly Eurosceptic orientation. A consideration of Thatcher's engagement with the European Parliament and the Conservative cohort within it adds an important new perspective to analysis of her overall attitude towards the Community.

Lastly, the thesis will examine the development of the European Parliament as an institution and how the Conservatives as a whole reacted to these changes. Initially, the European Parliament had limited powers over the Community budget. By 1992 the European Parliament had gained more influence, achieving broad legislative authority despite scepticism about this development from within some member states (including Germany, France and the UK) who felt the European Parliament undermined national parliaments. Notwithstanding reservations among some domestic players in the UK regarding the role of the European Parliament, British Conservative MEPs throughout this period wanted to increase the credibility of the institution of which they were members. They were successful in this objective, contributing greatly to the European Parliament's development. For instance, British Conservative MEPs were influential in shaping the rules of the European Parliament, which developed in ways that optimised its abilities to delay amendments, transactions and even the approval of the Community budget.

The thesis corrects shortcomings in the existing literature, which fails fully to convey the consistently pro-integration views held by many Conservative Party MEPs during the period

under consideration, and which does not properly recognise the contributions made by the MEPs to the European Parliament which this thesis examines.

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## **Abbreviations**

Christian Democrats	CDs
Council of Ministers	COM
European Court of Justice	ECJ
European Democratic Group	EDG
European Democratic Union	EDU
European Parliament	EP
European People's Party	EPP
Western European Union	WEU

# **Introduction**

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a detailed examination of the relationship between the European Parliament) and the British Conservative Party during the first nineteen years of the United Kingdom's (UK) participation in European integration. It approaches this task with three central questions in mind: what did British Conservative Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) do in the European Parliament? What was the nature of the relationship between Conservative MEPs and the domestic British Conservative Party, including its leadership and representatives in the Westminster Parliament? How did the British Conservative MEPs and Members of Parliament (MPs) react to the developments in the powers and procedures of the European Parliament? These core questions will be used to develop a clear understanding of the relationship between the European Parliament and the Conservative Party. The timeframe of 1973 to 1992 has been picked because it encompasses the period between two milestones: British accession and the completion of the Single Market. During this time, Conservative MEPs helped influence and were required to respond to a number of significant developments both in the UK and European politics. It is a long enough period to enable the drawing of general conclusions, while still presenting a manageable research load for a single project.

An important first task is to contextualise the thesis by describing the role of the European Parliament and how its influence increased during this period under consideration. The European Parliament in 1973 had three geographical places of operation: the committee work occurred in Brussels, the secretariat was in Luxembourg, and the plenary sessions were held in both Luxembourg and Strasbourg. These arrangements were clearly not ideal. Under the Treaty of Rome the site could be changed through a common agreement amongst member

states.<sup>1</sup> But since 1957, member states had been unable to agree on a single seat for the European Parliament, hence the three locations. Secondly, there were three different types of voting procedure in the European Parliament. Votes could be cast through a show of hands or through voting in the hemicycle, in which a button was pressed by the MEP to vote in favour, abstain or reject, the identity of the MEP remaining anonymous. The last method was through roll-calling in which MEPs had to verbally state their vote.<sup>2</sup>

Since 1973 the European Parliament has undergone transformations greater than that of any other Community institution.<sup>3</sup> The European Parliament in 1973 had two functions: it could dismiss the European Commission through a two-thirds majority vote, and it could approve or reject the non-compulsory budget of the Community, which consisted of only three per cent of the budget in 1973. In their detailed study of the European Parliament, Richard Corbett, Francis Jacobs and Michael Shackleton argue that due to these limited powers the European Parliament has always seen itself as an institution 'requiring evolution'.<sup>4</sup> Yet the European Parliament gained more influence with the signing of the Brussels Treaty in 1975. Under this treaty the European Parliament could audit the EU accounts and had the power to reject or approve the entire Community budget annually.<sup>5</sup> The next development of the European Parliament came in 1979 when it became the only directly elected institute of the Community. Academics Juliet Lodge and Valentine Herman suggest that direct elections justified the European Parliament's demand for more powers.<sup>6</sup> But Mark Franklin observes

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<sup>1</sup>European Parliament Archive, Treaty of Rome article 216, 25 March 1957, p.74.

<sup>2</sup> R. Corbett, F. Jacobs, M. Shackleton, *The European Parliament*, (London: Catermill, 1999), pp.10-35. Their account also touches on the time commitments of a MEP. They suggest over the course of a month that MEPs spent one to two weeks working over the three locations, and the remainder of the time was spent on constituency work. Since direct elections in 1979 MEPs also worked with extra-Parliamentary delegations, which provided links to non-member states for instance the African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) Joint Parliamentary Assembly.

<sup>3</sup> Community in this thesis will refer to EEC later the EU as a whole which includes the Council of Ministers, the European Court of Justice, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

<sup>4</sup> R. Corbett, F. Jacobs, M. Shackleton, pp.294-307.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> J. Lodge, and V. Herman, *Direct Elections to the European Parliament*, (London: Macmillan, 1982), p.3.

that low turnout for direct elections had a lasting impact and created ‘a crisis of legitimacy’ for the European Parliament.<sup>7</sup> The British view of the European Parliament varied, the Conservatives under Heath initially wanted to legitimise its role. Moreover, Thatcher from 1975 onwards supported direct elections and was in principle open to the prospect of the European Parliament gaining more influence. However, she was more pragmatic than Heath. Roger Scully in his account discusses her caution over the ambition of the European Parliament as she wanted to ensure that the majority of decision-making powers stayed with the Council of Ministers.<sup>8</sup> Yet there were many that opposed the European Parliament, including both Conservative and Labour MPs.<sup>9</sup> In his account Neil Nugent discusses how most of these MPs feared that the European Parliament presented a threat to the status of the Westminster Parliament.<sup>10</sup> This thesis will demonstrate how these MPs regularly questioned the efficiency and cost of the European Parliament, focusing especially on those who were Conservatives.

The powers of the European Parliament continued to increase in the following decade, as seen through the 1980 Isoglucose case which confirmed some of the existing powers of the European Parliament.<sup>11</sup> In 1979 the Council of Ministers acted without consulting the European Parliament (the Council moved to submit a proposal regarding Isoglucose without the opinion of the European Parliament), and the matter was brought to the ECJ which ruled the Council’s actions void as an ‘essential procedural requirement’ had not been undertaken.<sup>12</sup> The ruling suggested that the European Parliament had a prominent role to play in the Community. However, it would not be until the Single European Act (SEA) was

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<sup>7</sup> M. Franklin, J. Richardson, ed., *European Union: Power and Policy-Making*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), p.228.

<sup>8</sup> R. Scully in B. Steunenberg, J. Thomassen, ed., *The European Parliament: Moving Toward Democracy in the EU*, (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002), p.130.

<sup>9</sup> Opposing the EP refers to those MPs who were openly hostile to the EP, and for reasons that will be discussed in the thesis, did not want to see its powers increase.

<sup>10</sup> See N. Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, (London: Palgrave, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> The matter was regarding the use of Isoglucose as a sweetener for European cereals. See Nugent, p.242.

<sup>12</sup> European Parliament Archive, *Roquette v. Council*, (the Isoglucose Case), Case 138/79, 15 March 1980.

passed in 1986 that the European Parliament gained a further increase in its powers. The SEA provided the European Parliament with the right to amend proposals that required Qualified Majority Voting (QMV).<sup>13</sup> The European Parliament also gained the power to approve the assent to future enlargements of the Community. The European Parliament also established the ‘court of first instance’ which meant that the Council of Ministers, having consulted both the European Parliament and Commission, could refer matters to a general constitutional court.<sup>14</sup> Yet despite these expansions in the power of the European Parliament, the SEA defined the European Parliament as a ‘closely associated’ institution, and therefore as a lesser institution in terms of Community responsibility.<sup>15</sup> Writing in her memoirs, Thatcher subsequently expressed regret at signing the treaty as it encroached on British sovereignty.<sup>16</sup> Andrew Geddes suggests that the signing of the SEA was a watershed moment for the Conservative government and ‘thereafter the Prime Minister moved to a more sceptical position’.<sup>17</sup> The SEA was the first significant amendment to the Treaty of Rome and had granted the European Parliament more influence as it had to be consulted in many more areas of decision-making than in the past.

The signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 meant the European Parliament, again, gained more influence. Under the treaty the European Parliament increased its ability to advise and amend proposals that required QMV, ‘allowing it to fulfil its role of democratic accountability’.<sup>18</sup> Almost all areas where the Council of Ministers made legislative decisions were now discussed by the European Parliament. Moreover, decisions pertaining to matters such as structural and cohesion funds under the SEA were deemed under Maastricht to require an absolute majority of votes not only in the Council but also the European

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<sup>13</sup> European Parliament Archive, The Single European Act, 29 June 1987.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> M. Thatcher, *Downing Street*, (London: HarperCollins, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> A. Geddes, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Party since 1945*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p.64.

<sup>18</sup> European Parliament Archive, The Maastricht Treaty, 7 February 1992.

Parliament. After Maastricht the European Parliament's assent was required for all other areas of the assent procedure, including decisions about electoral procedure and the accession of new member states.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, under Maastricht, the European Parliament gained powers of legislative initiation, although this was limited to putting forward proposals to the Commission.<sup>20</sup> The Maastricht Treaty signed under John Major created divisions within the Conservative Party. Nicholas Crowson observes that Major conducted negotiations in a manner consistent with Conservative governments of the past, yet by 1992 the Conservatives were more divided as 'the tone and tenor of the debate had changed'.<sup>21</sup>

This thesis will consider the contributions made by the Conservative MEPs to the development of the European Parliament, and the impact they had on relations with other groupings. The grouping had many successes including the implementation of a new form of question time in the European Parliament in 1973; the work of Christopher Prout in the Rules Committee to assist in defining the role of the European Parliament in the early 1980s; the introduction of Spanish members to the European Democratic Grouping (EDG) in 1986; and Henry Plumb becoming the first and only British European Parliament president in 1987. This work will also assess the failures of the British Conservative MEPs as they struggled to build strong relationships with the European People's Party (EPP). The decision to sit independently in 1973 and the circumstances of the European Parliament presidency election of 1982 greatly impacted the relationship between the two and limited the amount of support the British Conservative MEPs received in relation to voting in the European Parliament. Moreover, the failure of the EDG to attract Greek MEPs in 1981 left it appearing to be a narrow British Conservative faction. This isolation worsened when in 1989 Spanish MEPs

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<sup>19</sup> Under the Assent procedure the European Parliament must provide the Council of Ministers on two occasions for more see N. Nugent.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> N. J. Crowson, *The Conservative Party and European Integration since 1945: At the Heart of Europe?*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p.3.



left the EDG. Moreover, owing to Thatcher's actions over the Falklands, the rebate and later her Bruges speech, other groupings struggled to work with British Conservative MEPs. In 1992 the EDG joined the EPP, which ultimately demonstrated that the EDG were unable to act as an effective alternative centre-right grouping to the EPP. The thesis will show that the merger was only possible between the dates of Thatcher's resignation (23 November 1990) and the ERM crisis (16 September 1992), as prior to Thatcher's resignation the EPP would not accept the EDG, and after the ERM crisis the hostility towards the Community by the Conservative Party would have prevented a merger. Hence, it was fortuitous that the merger occurred, which demonstrates that the EPP was not a natural fit for the EDG.

The thesis will also examine the relationship between the Conservative MEPs and the Conservative Party in the UK, including its leadership and representation in the Westminster Parliament. It will show that, in the initial period, Heath was committed to extensive collaboration with his MEPs. Thatcher enjoyed close collaboration with them at very significant moments including the 1975 referendum, during the rebate debate in 1984 and even over the SEA in 1986. However, there was an overall deterioration in the relations between the two after the previously mentioned meeting of March 1983. The thesis will discuss how individual MEPs, such as Henry Plumb, Jim Scott-Hopkins, Christopher Jackson, Christopher Prout and Diane Elles, were able to work closely with Thatcher (and with Whitehall departments). It will be shown that through studying Thatcher's interactions with British Conservative MEPs the thesis enriches the understanding of Thatcher's views on the Community. The thesis will support the view of John Young in identifying similarities between Harold Wilson and Thatcher's approach towards the Community.<sup>22</sup> She took a pragmatic view on Community matters, and this work will show that this approach extended to her dealings with the EP. However, unlike Young, this will be shown through her working

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<sup>22</sup> J.W. Young, *Britain and European Unity 1945–92*, (New York, Macmillan, 1992), p.136.

with the MEPs and European Parliament, thus contributing to the literature on Thatcher. The thesis will also show that towards the end of her tenure Thatcher's relationship with the Conservative delegation of MEPs worsened.

The relationship between the Conservative MEPs and Major will also be discussed. Major cultivated strong links with his MEPs from the start of his premiership in 1990. Many MEPs believed that he was more approachable on sensitive matters than Thatcher. Major's work with the Conservative MEPs supports the view that emerges from much of the literature about his premiership: that he was committed to balancing the different wings of the Conservative Party.<sup>23</sup> However, most accounts do not include the MEPs in their analysis, despite the MEPs tending to be more pro-integrationist than the party as a whole.

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<sup>23</sup> See, N.J. Crowson, pp.127-152.

## **Literature Review: Conservative Party and European Integration**

The thesis broadly sits between two flourishing literatures: on Conservative Party history and European integration history. There has been much literature on both subjects that will be discussed in this section. The literature review will first examine the Conservative Party's attitudes towards European integration and then move onto Labour's involvement. The Labour Party played an important role in European integration which is worth examining. The chapter will then explore the European Parliament's history and lastly examine the limited literature on the British Conservative MEPs.

### Conservative Party

The Conservative Party has often acted as a supporter of UK participation in European integration and has contributed to various European projects. In 1945, in spite of losing a general election, Churchill sought an international role and believed Europe offered such a stage. In his Zurich speech Churchill stated that 'we must build a kind of United States of Europe'.<sup>24</sup> There has been much literature on the interpretation of this speech. Some, such as Alan Watson, have suggested that it marks the starting point of post-war European integration.<sup>25</sup> However, historians such as John Young believe the speech was purposely ambiguous as Churchill 'did not want to upset the Anglo-American relationship'.<sup>26</sup> Yet Felix Klos has commented that the statement on Europe was vague since Churchill did not want the Soviet Union to feel challenged by a European bloc led by Britain.<sup>27</sup> The literature around the speech shows Churchill's ambivalence towards Europe. Historians such as Sue Onslow have suggested that there were three categories of Conservative thinking towards Europe in this

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<sup>24</sup> University of Pittsburgh (UOP), European Integration Archive, Winston Churchill's speech [on a Council of Europe]. Zurich, 19 September 1946.

<sup>25</sup> A. Watson, *Two Speeches to save the World*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), pp.170-203.

<sup>26</sup> J.W. Young, p.21.

<sup>27</sup> F. Klos, *Churchill on Europe: The Untold Story of Churchill's European Project*, (New York: I.B.Tauris, 2016), p.6.

period.<sup>28</sup> These three groups existed due to Britain's different experiences, compared to European nations, in the Second World War.<sup>29</sup> The first were the Europeanist outlook which favoured closer relations with Europe through 'unspecified' integration and closer collaboration but; at the level of nation states, not as part of a supranational organisation.<sup>30</sup>

The second category were the 'sceptics' who gathered more traction in the lead up to the Hague Conference in 1948.<sup>31</sup> These MPs again were not a formal group. They were characterised by their ambivalent views on Europe. The most notable MP from this group was Anthony Eden who had not made his views on Europe clear. He had stated in his internal correspondence during the war that 'Britain was broke, Europe was even broker',<sup>32</sup> and saw Britain's future as having an independent global role. However, his position was more complex (like the majority of this group) as he also saw the value of a harmonised Europe and even championed closer relations with France. The Hague Conference held in May 1948 is of great importance as the formation of the Council of Europe was discussed. Churchill, as the man who led European democracy to victory in the war, was a central figure at the conference. Yet Nicolas Crowson observed that 'Churchill's European rhetoric was symbolic, lacking in specifics',<sup>33</sup> again suggesting Churchill's ambivalence towards Europe. Much has been written about the significance of the Hague Conference. Jean Pateux refers to it as 'one of the milestones on the path to Europe'<sup>34</sup>, while Desmond Dinan highlighted the importance

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<sup>28</sup> See S. Onslow, *Backbench Debate within the Conservative Party and its influence on British Foreign Policy, 1948-57*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), or S. George, *Britain and European Integration*, (London: Blackwell, 1991).

<sup>29</sup> David Gowland, for example, notes that Britain, unlike mainland Europe, had escaped 'wartime trauma of invasion, defeat and occupation. Also see D. Gowland, A. Turner, and A. Wright, *Britain and European Integration since 1945: On the Sidelines*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), p.19.

<sup>30</sup> S. Onslow, pp.33-35.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p.35.

<sup>32</sup> The National Archives (TNA), HS 8/901, Correspondence with Eden, 7 December 1942.

<sup>33</sup> N.J. Crowson, p.15.

<sup>34</sup> J. Pateux, *Democracy and Human Rights for Europe: The Council of Europe's Contribution*, (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishers, 2009), p.43.

of Duncan Sandys and Peter Thorneycroft in the conference's organisation.<sup>35</sup> In his account, John Young also suggests the role it played in unifying European nations.<sup>36</sup> The conference was significant as it demonstrated the influence Churchill had on an international stage despite being in opposition. By 1949 integration continued with the signing of the Statute of the Council of Europe. There was some hesitancy, as plans regarding the integration of Europe with the Commonwealth were suggested but were deemed unfeasible. Several accounts examine in detail the problems regarding the integration of the two entities.<sup>37</sup>

The third group can be termed anti-Europeans. When the Schuman Plan was announced on 9 May 1950 the group expanded.<sup>38</sup> The Schuman Plan proposed to link the coal and steel industries of European nations through one organisation. British non-participation has been widely discussed. Robert Hogan has described the limited interest Whitehall departments took in the plan.<sup>39</sup> John Young argues against this point suggesting Whitehall departments were interested; however, the Labour government and members of the Conservative Party feared a 'third force' would threaten the Anglo-American relationship.<sup>40</sup> Sue Onslow suggests that Churchill was slow to react but realised the 'Conservatives could not stomach open support for the [Schuman] plan'.<sup>41</sup> In July 1950 Harold Macmillan and David Eccles published an alternative plan for a non-supranational coal and steel institution Nicholas Crowson suggests this 'marked a turning point when a new breed of Conservatives first elected to Westminster nailed their colours to the European standard'.<sup>42</sup> However, Onslow

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<sup>35</sup> D. Dinan, p.43.

<sup>36</sup> J.W. Young, pp.20-21.

<sup>37</sup> See G. C. Peden, 'Economic Aspects of British Perceptions of Power', in Becker and Knipping, eds, *Power in Europe?*, (New York: Routledge, 1986), pp. 256-9. Or A. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51*, (California: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 335-61. Or J. Kent, 'Bevin's Imperialism and the Idea of Euro-Africa, 1945-49'. In: M. Dockrill., J.W. Young, eds, *British Foreign Policy 1945-56*, (London, Macmillan, 1989), pp. 47-76.

<sup>38</sup> See Onslow, p.30-50.

<sup>39</sup> M. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain and the Reconstruction of Western Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.48-51.

<sup>40</sup> J.W. Young, p.31.

<sup>41</sup> S. Onslow, p.65.

<sup>42</sup> N.J. Crowson, p.20.

correctly argues that the Macmillan-Eccles Plan was designed to be a compromise between the French and British positions, but also to reassert British leadership of Europe.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore in 1950 the Pleven Plan was proposed which sought to create a European Defence Community (EDC). The matter was further complicated as at the same time the USA raised questions about rearmament for West Germany a very sensitive matter for France. The EDC eventually failed due to the French National Assembly rejecting the proposal in August 1954. Much had been written about the EDC, John Young argues that its failure confirmed British doubts about the practicality of supranationalism for a time.<sup>44</sup> Nicholas Crowson argues that the EDC's failure gave Eden the opportunity to resolve the issue of German rearmament within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) framework.<sup>45</sup> Whilst Sue Onslow suggests the period from 1950-54 regarding the EDC further dissuaded Conservatives about the supposed attractions of European integration.<sup>46</sup> European integration would continue with the developments in Messina in 1955 and the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and Britain participated in neither. Spencer Mawby argues that there were also fears amongst the Europeanists that European consolidation would proceed without Britain and that this would damage Britain's global position.<sup>47</sup> James Ellison has concluded that this was an important period as Anglo-French tensions became more acute.<sup>48</sup> Efforts were thus made to approach Germany and France to negotiate a free trade agreement in 1958; both countries, however, rejected the idea. There has been much literature on the significance of the Treaty of Rome and Britain. Some historians, such as Martin Dedman, have referred to it as 'a costly failure' for Britain.<sup>49</sup> Others believe that Britain's

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<sup>43</sup> S. Onslow, P.70.

<sup>44</sup> J.W. Young, P.54.

<sup>45</sup> N.J. Crowson, p. 39.

<sup>46</sup> S. Onslow, pp.95-97.

<sup>47</sup> S. Mawby, *Containing Germany: Britain and the Arming of the Federal Republic*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p.77.

<sup>48</sup> J. Ellison, *Threatening Europe: Britain and the Creation of the European Community 1955-1958*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2000), p.9.

<sup>49</sup> M. Dedman, *The Origins and Developments of the European 1945-95*, (London: Routledge, 1997), p.67.

'missed opportunities' lay further back in the refusal to engage with the Schuman Plan.<sup>50</sup> Regardless, it can be seen that Britain had many opportunities to engage with European developments prior to its first application to join the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1961. As can be seen Conservative opinion differed greatly towards European integration as it fundamentally raised questions for Britain's position in the World. Some initially opposed a supranational organisation, and as seen from above, even those who were committed to engaging with Europe were still hesitant in entering a more federal system, favouring instead an intergovernmental framework approach. But by 1961 it was clear to Macmillan that the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) 'was not delivering as expected'.<sup>51</sup> Macmillan would thus seek British entry into the EEC. Again, Conservative attitudes towards accession differed as some feared what this meant for Commonwealth trade, whilst others feared the loss of Parliamentary sovereignty in a supranational organisation amongst other reasons which will be examined in greater detail in the background chapter.<sup>52</sup>

More broadly, since accession in 1973 European integration has caused divisions within the Conservative Party as the Community evolved from common market to a single market. The Maastricht Treaty signed on 7 February 1992, established the European Union (EU) on three pillars: the European Communities, Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters (JHA), and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). It introduced European citizenship and launched the economic and monetary union (EMU) demonstrating how much the European project evolved in the time period this thesis covers. The literature regarding the Conservative Party has demonstrated the divisions this caused internally. Seldon and Ball state that

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<sup>50</sup> C. Lord, *A Democratic Audit of the European Union*, (London: Palgrave, 2004).

<sup>51</sup> N.J. Crowson, pp.27-28. For more information on EFTA see G. Wikes, ed., *Britain's Failure to Enter the European Community, 1961-63*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>52</sup> Both the 1961 and 1967 applications will be discussed in the background chapter.

‘factionalism has been an endemic in the party.’<sup>53</sup> Jonathan Turner argues that ‘in the modern Conservative Party Europe is fundamentally the basic divide running through the party.’<sup>54</sup> Richard Rose comments that ‘factionalism runs deeply within the Conservatives, although this has traditionally been behind ‘the façade of unity.’<sup>55</sup> European integration has caused these divisions as it has brought into question Britain’s position in the world. Seldon and Ball have argued that Europe was a very sensitive topic for the Conservative Party as it touches on the legacy of the British Empire, referring to it as ‘a central integrating force within the party’.<sup>56</sup> However, the decline of Empire has forced Britain to re-evaluate its position in the world and has led to closer relations with Europe. Due to the complex and sensitive issue of Britain’s position in the world, more Conservative MPs after accession started to become increasingly hostile towards the Community and caused many problems for the party’s whips.<sup>57</sup> The hostility by Conservative MPs also shows that the Community after accession was linked to the issue of party management.

Baker, Gamble, and Ludlam also attempt to discuss the multidimensional effects of the Community on Britain. They argue that European integration has been decisive because it has linked crucial ‘debates about Britain’s role in the World political economy’.<sup>58</sup> They highlight three factors which have provoked the most sustained and serious disputes over European integration. The first is the question that arises from Britain’s global position. They argue that European integration produced divisions within the Conservatives like those provoked by arguments over free trade and tariff reform in the early twentieth century. Secondly, it has

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<sup>53</sup> A. Seldon and S. Ball, *Conservative Century: The Conservative Party since 1900*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 342.

<sup>54</sup> J. Turner, *The Tories and Europe*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p.20.

<sup>55</sup> R. Rose, ‘Tensions in Conservative Party Philosophy’, *Political Quarterly*, 32.3 (1961), pp.275-283.

<sup>56</sup> A. Seldon and S. Ball, p.343. Inveterate anti-European feeling within British politics and society (dating back centuries), reinforced by Palmerston’s argument of perennial interests, not perennial allies. For a number of Conservatives, this had been strengthened by the experience of two world wars, see Onlsow.

<sup>57</sup> See P. Norton, *Conservative Dissidents: Dissent within the Parliamentary Conservative Party, 1970-74* (London: Temple Smith, 1978), chapters one and two.

<sup>58</sup> D. Baker, A. Gamble, and S. Ludlam, ‘Whips or Scorpions?: The Maastricht Vote and the Conservative Party’, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 46.2 (1993), 151-166.



directly threatened both national identity and national sovereignty, which has undermined the party's electoral position and ideology. Lastly, it has highlighted the division over state intervention and free market policies. Overall, Baker, Gamble, and Ludlam believe that the Conservatives were divided on two separate axes: national sovereignty and interdependence on the one hand, and a divide over extended and limited government on the other.<sup>59</sup> Their account (like Seldon and Ball's) show the difficulties faced by the Conservatives because a choice had to be made about Britain's role in the world. The question of this role has had an obvious impact on the party's leadership as it has often had to find an appropriate response to the European question, which has been challenging as Europe proved an issue which could easily divide the party.

Furthermore, Nicholas Crowson has also stressed that the Conservatives maintained a consistent pro-European wing within the party, even if at times this was in a minority. He refers to this group of Conservatives as 'Europeanists' on a number of occasions.<sup>60</sup> Crowson discusses the role of groups such as the Conservative Group for Europe, the Macleod Group, the Blue Chip Group, and the Positive Group for Europe. He explains how these different groups have attempted to present their pro-European views and suggests that there was a correlation between centrist-leaning Conservative MPs and pro-European ideas.<sup>61</sup> Yet Crowson overlooks a component of the party that might have strengthened his thesis, namely the Conservative MEPs who consistently had a strong pro-European element. Anthony Forster takes a different perspective to Crowson, emphasising the importance of Euroscepticism within the Conservative Party in post-war politics. He holds that Europe has periodically changed and thus opposition towards Europe has come from different parts of the party. Opposition towards Europe was originally against 'the common market; it then

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> N.J. Crowson.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, pp.130-153.

changed to opposition against political and monetary union.’<sup>62</sup> Forster does suggest, however, that the Europe issue has never transcended party loyalty.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, there has been much work on Britain’s position in the world which also encompasses the Conservative Party’s attitude towards Europe. Christopher Bartlett correctly emphasises the importance of the Cold War during the period of 1973-92 and the effects it had in shaping Europe.<sup>64</sup> Andrew Geddes, like Forster’s work mentioned above, also suggests the importance of the Community in British political thought. Geddes argues that the Community has ‘Europeanised’ British politics as it became a central topic for debate throughout the 1980s.<sup>65</sup> His work also demonstrates the divisions Europe caused within the Conservative Party. However, Hugo Young’s account, which examines Euroscepticism, concludes that anti-European feelings have been a traditional aspect of British politics and represents nothing new. He also suggests opposition to Europe has traditionally come from all areas of the political spectrum. Nonetheless he concludes that ‘at important moments [Thatcher] gave Europe the loudest agenda’.<sup>66</sup>

The later part of the thesis covers the replacement of Thatcher by John Major as leader of the Conservative Party. The specific topic of John Major’s time as Prime Minister has been much discussed. John Young suggests that the early years of Major’s premiership were marked by Major trying to maintain ensure party unity. Young comments that ‘with an election necessary by June 1992, and deeper division between pro and anti-Europeans in the Conservative Party thanks to the leadership contest, he had to prevent EC issues upsetting domestic politics’.<sup>67</sup> Lastly, Helen Thompson comments on the significance of the ERM Crisis for the Major government. Her work illustrates the deep divisions Europe caused, and

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<sup>62</sup> A. Forster, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> C. Bartlett, *British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century*, (London: Palgrave, 1989), pp.92-122.

<sup>65</sup> A. Geddes, *The EU and British Politics* (London: Palgrave, 2003), p.5.

<sup>66</sup> H. Young, *This Blessed Plot Churchill to Blair*, (London: Macmillan, 1999), p.306.

<sup>67</sup> J.W. Young, p. 161.

how it shifted the Conservative Party into a more Eurosceptic stance.<sup>68</sup> It specifically tracks the ERM and the Conservative government between 1979 and 1994. The later period from 1988-92 regarding ERM will be discussed in this thesis. The literature described in these section shows that the period under examination was a turbulent one and that the Community was a central concern for the Conservative Party from 1973 to 1992.

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<sup>68</sup> H. Thompson, *The British Conservative Government and the ERM 1979-1994*, (London: Palgrave, 1999), p.141.

## Labour Party

It is, however, difficult to understand the Conservative Party's relationship with the Community without understanding the internal situations of other parties during this period. Labour had been greatly involved with the Community, which had in turn affected the Conservative Party's approach to Europe. Moreover, Labour encountered similar problems to the Conservatives over the European issue. Harold Wilson in 1967 re-applied for EEC membership, an event which has been covered in detail by Helen Parr. She highlights that the second application made the idea of accession more acceptable to Westminster.<sup>69</sup> John Young also describes how Wilson attempted to work with De Gaulle to 'win the General over to British membership'.<sup>70</sup> In his second term Wilson persisted in his determination despite the debates surrounding the Community on account of deep divisions in the Labour Party over membership. The 1975 referendum illustrated best how divided both parties were over Europe with cross-party alliances occurring, such as the Tony Benn–Enoch Powell relationship. Robert Saunders in his account states that the different 'allegiances opened a space for an unusual array of campaign focuses'.<sup>71</sup> Stephen Wall establishes that Wilson's inability to resolve divisions within the Labour Party 'forced him to commit to a referendum'.<sup>72</sup> In their account, Butler and Kitinger fully explore the 1975 referendum and the significant impact it had on Britain's relationship with the Community.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, despite the referendum result Labour would remain deeply divided over membership with the creation of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1981. Rachel Holden supports this view and even suggests that Europe attributed to the lack of electoral success on the part of the Labour

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<sup>69</sup> H. Parr, *Britain's Policy towards the European Community: Harold Wilson and Britain's World Role, 1964-1967*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), pp.114-133.

<sup>70</sup> J.W. Young, p.89.

<sup>71</sup> R. Saunders, *Yes to Europe! The 1975 Referendum*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2018, p.8.

<sup>72</sup> S. Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Vol. II: From Rejection to Referendum, 1963-1975*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), p.557.

<sup>73</sup> D. Butler and U. Kitinger, *The 1975 Referendum*, 2nd edition, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).

Party from 1979 onwards.<sup>74</sup> Labour did, however, change its stance on Europe significantly under Neil Kinnock after the 1983 general election when it had advocated withdrawal. Mitchell and Heller observe that the party from 1983 onwards ‘viewed Europe as an opportunity rather than a threat’.<sup>75</sup> Kenneth Morgan suggests that for the Labour leadership the European Community policies overlapped with two areas of concern: economic policy and party unity.<sup>76</sup> Kinnock also saw Europe as an opportunity to modernise the Labour Party. The Alternative Economic Strategy (AES) published in 1980 gave rise to the potential of an Alternative European Strategy which Kinnock supported. The European Strategy acknowledged Britain’s position in the world, and the need for interdependence between Britain and Europe. This was all part of Labour’s broader policy review process which was aimed at evaluating party organisation and party unity.<sup>77</sup> Kinnock attempted to move the party away from the far left, though the main purpose of this policy review process was to allow the leadership to have more control over the direction of the overall party. As seen from the literature discussed Labour did play a role in Britain’s relationship with the Community.

### European Parliament

Another issue recognised in much of the literature involves the way in which the EU developed and the way in which Britain had to adapt in response. An important part of such analysis is the tension that emerged between different European institutions. It is traditionally argued that Britain, Germany, and France have wanted the powers of decision-making to reside mainly within the Council of Ministers.<sup>78</sup> They have perceived the European

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<sup>74</sup> See R. Holden, *The Making of New Labour’s European Policy*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave 2002), chapter one.

<sup>75</sup> A. Mitchell and R. Heller, ‘New Labour, New Deal’, *New Statesman*, 26 July 1996, p.10.

<sup>76</sup> K. Morgan., *Britain Since 1945: The People’s Peace*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.468-507.

<sup>77</sup> See M. Smith and J. Spear, eds, *The Changing Labour Party*, (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>78</sup> See S. George, *Britain and European Integration since 1945*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

Parliament as a supranational institution that would take sovereignty away from member states. Despite this, the EP has developed profoundly since British accession.

However, in his account, Neil Nugent suggests that the European Parliament has weaknesses in three areas. The first is that the European Parliament, unlike national parliaments, does not have full legislative powers. The final decision of what becomes law is decided by the other Community institutions. The Council of Ministers could even overturn European Parliament amendments that have or have not been suggested to the European Commission. Secondly, the EP is expected to deliver opinions as early as possible to the Council of Ministers. This has proved a difficult task to complete quickly due to the slow bureaucratic process of consultation, which has been exacerbated over time as the European Parliament has grown in size substantially. As a result, the Council often adopts a ‘common position’ before the European Parliament provides its opinion. This is particularly the case when urgent actions are required due to sudden developments in areas of concern that side-line the European Parliament’s influence. Another weakness is that the European Parliament is often not consulted on Council legislation. It lacks any right to be consulted on most external negotiations which the Council conducts with third-party countries on behalf of the EU. The EP’s approval is not even required when trade agreements are concluded. Lastly, the European Parliament does not have to be consulted on Commission legislation.<sup>79</sup> Nugent’s work demonstrates the evaluation of the European Parliament and this thesis will also examine the European Parliament’s powers, and how the British Conservative MEPs contributed in making the European Parliament more influential in the period from 1973 to 1992.

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<sup>79</sup> N. Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, (London: Palgrave, 2015), 320-340.

Guglielmo Carchedi observes that many have argued this is ‘another example of executive power, and legislative and democratic weakness’.<sup>80</sup> It has highlighted the major weaknesses of the EP. However, the EP has clearly assumed an increasingly important role in the EU. The work of Helen Wallace specifically discusses how the powers of the European Parliament grew in the period between 1973 and 1992. She singles out the importance of the Single European Act (SEA) and how it embedded wider institutional changes to the Community.<sup>81</sup> She goes on to explain how the SEA increased the European Parliament’s influence. John Peterson and Michael Shackleton build on Wallace’s work and explain where the EP fits into the decision-making process in the Community. Their work assesses the four main institutions of the Community and argues that the EP plays an ever-growing role, particularly after the signing of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007.<sup>82</sup>

Overall, the European Parliament is still not regarded as a ‘proper parliament’ due to its formal powers being weaker than national parliaments. However, the European Parliament does have influence in several areas that make it a key component of the decision-making process in the Community. The European Parliament as an institution has also been studied particularly by Richard Corbett. Having been a Labour MEP (1996-2014) Corbett’s account provides a first-hand insight into the workings of the European Parliament. Moreover, his work argues the growing need for European Parliament groupings to be diverse.<sup>83</sup> Diversity was a concern that the British Conservative MEPs struggled with throughout the period of 1973-92. Simon Hix enhances Corbett’s account as he discusses the work of a MEP and how decision-making occurs in the Community. He cites that decisions were taken mainly in committee and not in the hemicycle. Moreover, his work highlights the need for MEPs to

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<sup>80</sup> G. Carchedi, *For Another Europe: A Class Analysis of European Economic Integration*, (London: Verso, 2001), p.161.

<sup>81</sup> H. Wallace, *Policy-making in the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.52-71.

<sup>82</sup> J. Peterson, M. Shackleton, *The Institutions of the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.124-148.

<sup>83</sup> R. Corbett, and K. Hänsch, *The European Parliament's Role in Closer EU Integration*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp.50-90.

negotiate with one another to achieve a desired result.<sup>84</sup> Lastly, Desmond Dinan gives one of the most significant accounts into the study of European integration. His work tracks European integration, providing insight from all the Community institutions. Moreover, in his chapters dedicated to Britain's contributions to the Community, he discusses the role of the Conservative Party in Europe and even discusses the relationship between the Community and Thatcher. Dinan explains how the passing of the SEA and the gaining of powers by the European Parliament frustrated the Conservative government.<sup>85</sup> He also concludes that Thatcher's legacy on gaining concessions from the Community meant that 'defending Britain's rebate became an article of faith for subsequent Prime Ministers' and other nations that sought concessions.<sup>86</sup> This section has illustrated the weaknesses of the European Parliament and outlines the significant existing literature on the EP's development over time, on which this thesis will draw.

### British Conservative MEPs

There is less literature specifically examining the British Conservative MEPs. In their account, Nelsen and Guth examine the relationship between the EPP and the British Conservative MEPs. They track the long history of religion, conservatism, and European unity.<sup>87</sup> It is commonly agreed that continental Conservatives (and some in Britain) believed that Western Europe as an entity can be unified by their common experiences of 'Latin Christianity'.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, in the original cohort of MEPs, the Christian Democrats (CDs) had emphasised the role of religion even through the selection of the grouping's name. They

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<sup>84</sup> S. Hix, A. Noury, and G. Roland, *Democratic politics in the European Parliament*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.32-54.

<sup>85</sup> D. Dinan, *Origins and Evaluation of the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.305-327.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* 320.

<sup>87</sup> B. Nelsen and J. Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union: Confessional Culture and the Limits of Integration*, (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2015).

<sup>88</sup> P. Bugge, 'The Nation Supreme: The Idea of Europe 1914-1945', in K. Wilson and J. Van Der Dussen, eds., *The History of the Idea of Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 132-134.



would later change this to the European People's Party (EPP) to ensure the grouping appealed to a larger demographic and thus attract MEPs from different groupings. Yet religion did remain a core aspect of the EPP, in terms of unifying a diverse group of European nations. Nelsen and Guth believe this affected the relationship the British Conservative MEPs had with the EPP. In his examination of religion in British politics, Paul Bugge states that religion played a lesser role for the British Conservatives, although not specifically mentioning the MEPs.<sup>89</sup> Yet Heuser and Buffet have emphasised the importance of religion and decision-making from an EPP perspective, which led to tensions between the two groupings.<sup>90</sup> Their work supports the views of Nelsen and Guth. However, Tony Jensen, who was the former Secretary General of the EPP (1988-92), gives a much more detailed first-hand account of the British Conservative MEPs. He states that 'Conservative MEPs understood, before their party friends in Westminster or in Central Office, that Britain's future is at the heart of Europe'.<sup>91</sup> Caroline Jackson has also specifically examined British Conservative MEPs from 1973 to 1979. In her work she examines the early workings of the grouping and discusses at length the contributions the MEPs made to the EP, namely the introduction of a new question time.<sup>92</sup> However, this thesis will go into more detail regarding the British Conservative MEPs' conduct as it benefited from access to more recent and relevant archival material. As a result, the thesis goes beyond Jackson's work and highlights the early difficulties the British MEPs faced, particularly in their dealings with other groupings and the eventual decision taken to sit independently, which had a lasting impact. Moreover, this thesis will show that the divide that occurred between the EDG and EPP was not only from a religious perspective. Tensions arose through differing personalities and various episodes between the two groupings, the

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> B. Heuser and C. Buffet, eds, *Haunted by History: Myths in International Relations*, (Oxford: Berghahn, 1998).

<sup>91</sup> T. Jensen, *The European People's Party*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p.54.

<sup>92</sup> C. Jackson, 'The First British MEPs: Styles and Strategies', *Contemporary European History*, 2.2 (1993), 169-95.

two largest being the decision of the British Conservatives in 1973 not to sit with the CDs, and the EP Presidency election in 1982. Both events had a long-lasting impact until the merger between the two groupings in 1992.

From the historiography discussed above, it can be seen that the Conservative Party has had long-term difficulties regarding Europe that have impacted the party. Broadly, this thesis draws together and puts into dialogue the literature on European integration history and Conservative Party history, and supplements it with original archival research.

## Methodology

From the literature review and introduction, it can be seen that there are clear gaps in the historiography which this thesis sets out to fill.<sup>93</sup> To this end an archival research approach was taken to address these concerns. There are a number of sources that were consulted to gain a better understanding of these themes. There are six main archives that were thoroughly researched: the Bodleian Library, the Churchill Archive Centre, the National Archive, the University of Pittsburgh European Integration Archive, the British Library newspaper archive and oral testimonies.

The Bodleian Library hosts an array of sources that are vital to this thesis. The thesis refers to the papers of many Conservative MEPs who have deposited their private papers at the Bodleian. Peter Kirk's private papers are of critical importance as he led the Conservative delegation in 1973 and was subsequently the Conservative Grouping's leader until 1977.<sup>94</sup> The Conservative Central Office (CCO) holds the majority of the MEP grouping's papers. The material includes minutes from meetings, MEP publications, notes from study days and committee reports. Moreover, the Conservative Research Department (CRD) has a significant amount of material regarding the EP as well as wider Community concerns. It holds many papers regarding the three European Elections this thesis covers (1979, 1984 and 1989), as well as research on specific matters regarding MEPs.<sup>95</sup> After conducting research it was clear that the CCO holds more records relating to the MEPs than the CRD which does show that the Conservative MEPs were engaging more with the CCO and had limited interaction with the CRD unless it was in the lead up to a European Election. This differs greatly to some

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<sup>93</sup> This includes, what did the MEPs do, what were their relationship like with the Conservative Party, and what was the overall Conservative response to European Parliament developments over the period this thesis covers?

<sup>94</sup> Papers such as Bodleian Library, CCO 508/1/1 European Conservative Group Correspondence between Peter Kirk and Acting Chairman (3/3), January-December 1973.

<sup>95</sup> Matters include, the salary and expenses of a MEP, European Election campaign fund allocations, the procedure to select MEPs and the procedure to select the leader of the MEP delegation amongst other topics.

Conservative MPs who tended to work more closely with the CRD. The reason this occurred was because MEPs tended to rely on European Parliament support staff (such as grouping coordinators who were hired by individual groupings) and committees to gather research or campaign in the European Parliament, they chose to work with the CRD only when it was specifically around a European election.<sup>96</sup> This differed to some Conservative MPs who relied more on the CRD and thus an early difference in the way MEPs and MPs worked can be seen through this archive.

Another source that was relied upon was the Thatcher Papers deposited in the Churchill College Archive. These were of great value for illustrating Thatcher's as well as other senior Conservative members' attitudes towards the European Parliament. Moreover, they also show how Conservative MEPs fitted into the overall Conservative Party. The archive has a substantial number of documents regarding Thatcher's shadow cabinet from 1975 to 1979. These documents are particularly useful as it allows the thesis to show what the Conservative MEPs did during the 1975 referendum.<sup>97</sup> The Churchill College Archive also fills the deficit of the National Archives in this period regarding the Conservative Party. There are extensive records on briefings which highlight the attitudes of Conservative members towards the EP. Lastly, the Thatcher Papers indicate how Thatcher's attitudes hardened towards Europe and the impact this change had on Conservative MEPs. The archive also holds the private papers of prominent MEPs, including Christopher Prout, the leader of the Conservative MEPs from 1988, and Sir Frederick Catherwood, a MEP for Cambridgeshire from 1979 to 1994. Moreover, some private papers such as Douglas Hogg's and Patrick Gordon-Walker's

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<sup>96</sup> Author interview with Anthony Teasdale, 20 January 2017. Additionally many MEPs who were on a specific committee chose to go on a committee where they could use their specialised knowledge, as seen with Christopher Prout (a constitutional lawyer) joining the Rules Committee, or Michael Welsh (who worked as a director at Levis) who chose to sit on the Worker Directives Committee, which meant again they did not have to turn to the CRD for research specifically. The European Parliament Library Services which was limited at the time was also used by many groupings, this would eventually become the European Parliament Research Service in 2013, operating as an independent in-house think-tank for the European Parliament.

<sup>97</sup> For example, see Bodleian Library, CCO 508/1/1, Referendum Brief, 5 April 1975.

(despite being part of the Labour party) also provide insight into the workings between the EP and Westminster.

The National Archives was of great importance, as it holds papers for all the government administrations in the period examined in this thesis. Foreign and Commonwealth Office papers (FCO Series) were referred to since Britain's interaction with the European Parliament was recorded in these. In addition, the Prime Ministers' papers (PREM Series) were examined, particularly for the content relating to European Council meetings and discussion of policy towards Europe. Council meetings were important because they were the forum in which member states made decisions on all matters, including those regarding the European Parliament (such as direct elections, and the size and site of the EP). Cabinet papers (CAB Series) were also useful. They showed the differing views within and between cabinets towards the Community, and in particular the European Parliament. They also provided evidence of how the British government saw Britain's position in the world, with regards to both Europe and the Anglo-American relationship. Cabinet papers also reveal attitudes towards the European Parliament. The thesis will come on to show the importance of the European Parliament during the budget rebate, however, there was a lack of material in Treasury papers relating to the European Parliament showing the limited engagement that the department had with British MEPs.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, as well be shown in the thesis those MEPs that were able to build relations with departments chose instead to work directly with the Cabinet Office and Number Ten.

The University of Pittsburgh's European Integration Archive was of great assistance to this project. It has an extensive collection on the Community and holds records of all European Parliament debates, which explore the relationship between Conservative MEPs and their

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<sup>98</sup> A point of interest was that papers prior to British Accession to the EEC in 1973 refer to the European Parliament as the 'European Assembly' which changed after accession in 1973.

European counterparts. It shows that MEPs were more willing to work across party lines, and this was also the case for British MEPs. In turn these debates also show the attitudes of the various groupings towards each other and the development of the European Parliament as an institution. These files also depict how Conservative MEPs interacted with one another. The archival material is of great value because, from accession in 1973, the Conservatives created their own grouping. Understanding how a new group developed is another aspect that has been neglected in the literature that this thesis builds on. The archive also holds minutes from the various EP committees as well as European Council meetings. Thus it can be used to gain an understanding of how decision-making in the Community occurs. It also demonstrates the way in which the institutional structure of the Community changed over time and the growing role of Conservative MEPs. The minutes from committees also show the relationship British Conservative MEPs held with Continental European MEPs.

Additionally, the British Newspaper Archive was consulted for this project. Newspapers were used to gain a better understanding of public discourse around the European Parliament. It was particularly useful to examine newspapers during the run up to direct elections, as these provide evidence of the nature of campaigns by MEPs. This in turn shows what issues concerning the EP and Community were regarded as important to the public by the MEPs and the media. Archival papers from *The Economist*, *The Times*, and *The Financial Times* assisted greatly with this research. These papers helped illustrate the views of Conservative figures as many wrote articles on Europe. Newspapers also show the role of the media in this period and how different papers viewed the developments of the Community. The newspapers helped develop an in-depth knowledge of British public debate surrounding the EP as it gained new powers and responsibilities throughout this period. Moreover, as this thesis looks at dates beyond 1988, newspapers become more important in the latter part of this thesis (particularly in sections three and four), as access to archival material was limited.

Newspapers such as *The Sun*, *The Daily Mail*, and *The Daily Mirror* were consulted but these newspapers had very few contributions by Conservative MEPs compared to *The Economist*, *The Times*, *The Financial Times*, and even *The Guardian* which supports an argument of the thesis that Conservative MEPs were willing to work across traditional party lines.

Lastly, this thesis relied on oral testimonies. Twenty interviews were conducted with either Conservative MEPs or support staff who worked in the European Parliament. An effort was made to speak to as many MEPs that were still alive and willing to be approached; some were unable to partake due to ill health or were unavailable. Barring one, interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis. The interviews themselves were semi-structured and were used to develop an understanding of the work on a MEP both domestically and in the European Parliament. Interviews also provided an opportunity to understand what these MEPs felt the major challenges were for them specifically. The interviews did show that depending on the constituency the job domestically varied between cities and rural seats as matters such as the fisheries policy and Common Agriculture Policy mattered more in rural seats. Approximately fourteen of these interviews were directly relevant to the thesis, as they provided insight into how the Conservative MEPs worked. They also built on certain areas where the archival records were limited. They assisted in discerning the relationship between various actors in Europe, for instance, between British MEPs and Commissioners as there was very limited archival material in this area specifically. Interviews with MEPs also highlighted how the EP worked in practice, as many MEPs sat on a variety of European Parliament committees. These committees passed through many changes as the Community enlarged. Yet a record of how they developed cannot be clearly found in archival records. These interviews also provide insight into the relationship between MEPs and Westminster. Due to the timing of this thesis, which was researched in the lead up to and aftermath of the 2016 British-EU referendum, many political actors were willing to be interviewed. Yet, many

saw the interviews as a forum to voice their opinions on present-day affairs regarding Brexit.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, when I initially started this thesis I struggled to conduct oral interviews, I was fortunate enough to secure a job working alongside Anthony Seldon, this furthered my ability and confidence in interviewing and thus fourteen of these interviews were used directly in this thesis. The remaining six were also very beneficial but were not directly used in the thesis. Considering the current political climate, it was also important to handle testimonies carefully. Furthermore, there are already a number of oral interviews that have been conducted by various institutions and historians regarding Europe and the Conservative Party. The Institute of Contemporary British History had many witness seminars on matters such as the Common Agricultural Policy, which were also drawn upon.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, the European University Institute hosts the official EU archives, where interviews with former British political actors who were involved in the Community are deposited.

There were also other archives and material that was consulted to provide completeness to the thesis. One Conservative MEP, Michael Welsh (MEP from 1979 to 1994), allowed access to his diaries, kept from 1979 to the present day, which was a valuable resource for this thesis. They provide a unique first-hand account of meetings held in the European Parliament's committees and meetings at Number Ten with the Prime Minister. The European Parliament Archive located in Luxembourg was also consulted. It holds many of the groupings' papers, including those of the British Conservatives, and has a clear record on how groupings voted and interacted with one another. Moreover, the library has papers from the Community's civil service and best displays the interaction between the EP and other Community institutions. It also holds the reports of the committees the Conservative MEPs worked on, providing evidence of their attitudes on a number of subjects. *Hansard* is also important as the debates

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<sup>99</sup> Each interview was historically contingent, influenced in very large part by the Brexit debate. This encouraged interviewees to stress their perceived importance of their work in EEC institutions in an earlier era.

<sup>100</sup> Institute of Contemporary British History, Witness Seminar: European Referendum, 5 June 1995, p.14.



in Westminster demonstrate the attitudes of MPs towards the Community. Furthermore, there are two memoirs of former Conservative MEPs that were used: Andrew Pearce's, who was an MEP from 1979 to 1989, and Henry Plumb who was leader of Conservative MEP delegation from 1982 to 1987.<sup>101</sup> Plumb's work was particularly beneficial in providing a direct account of events from a senior Conservative MEP perspective. Lastly, Parliamentary Archives (where possible) were consulted as select committees examined specific Community matters that related to the European Parliament.<sup>102</sup>

There are issues that, though significant do not fall directly within the scope of the thesis and these will be outlined. Firstly, it does not explore in-depth constituency work of MEPs. MEPs spent a considerable amount of times working in their constituencies and building local relationships. MEP constituency boundaries differed from MP boundaries.<sup>103</sup> As a result, MEPs dealt with several MPs in their constituencies. However, as each constituency differed, so did the environment in which the MEPs worked. Some MEPs felt less detached from Westminster due to the relations they had with the Westminster MPs within their constituencies, while the experiences of other MEPs were more negative. Furthermore, this thesis does not explore in great detail the history of Labour MEPs, who attended in 1976 and joined the Socialist Grouping. The Conservative MEPs did on occasion have to react to what the Labour MEPs did in the European Parliament, however, the Labour MEPs relationship and work in the European Parliament differed from that of the Conservatives. Lastly, the thesis was not able to cover all aspects of European Parliament committee work. The majority of work in the EP occurred in committees after 1979. There were a total of 28 committees in the period from 1973 to 1992 hence it would be difficult to cover all of these.

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<sup>101</sup> A. Pearce, *My Personal Story: In and Out of Europe*, (Kibworth Beauchamp: Matador, 2003). H. Plumb, *The Plumb Line: A Journey through Agriculture and Politics*, (Oxford: Greycoat Press, 2001).

<sup>102</sup> Select Committees though important, rarely covered matters related to the European Parliament. This thesis refers to the Direct Election Select Committee and the Foreign Affairs Select Committee where possible when they did discuss European Parliament matters.

<sup>103</sup> For a detailed account on British MEPs and constituency work see, D. Judge, *Representation: Theory and Practice in Britain*, (New York: Routledge, 1999).

The thesis will instead focus on three of the more prominent ones that influenced the Conservatives in this period: the Political Affairs Committee, the Budget Committee and the Rules Committee.<sup>104</sup> These committees clearly demonstrate the relationship between MEPs and MPs as well as highlighting the more significant contributions made by the MEPs. Regardless, of the areas that cannot be covered, the evidence considered for this thesis is sufficient to address the three core questions outlined in the introduction.

The thesis is divided into four sections as seen in the table of contents. Section one consists of two chapters examining directly what the British Conservative MEPs did in the European Parliament and then moves on to discuss the difficulties around direct elections. Section two, has two chapters, the first broadly addresses the domestic situation of the UK in this earlier period and how the MEPs built relations with the Conservative leaders (Heath and later Thatcher). The second chapter looks at Mediterranean enlargement of the Community (Greek and potential Turkish membership) and the EMS. It will show how MEPs and MPs worked together and shared similar views on these developments. The approach for section one to look at MEPs and then section two to explore the broader domestic situation was taken because it was important to immediately establish the complexities of the European Parliament and the working environment of the MEPs. Furthermore, it demonstrates what these MEPs wanted to achieve in the European Parliament (making it a functioning and credible institution) and this is vital to understand prior to addressing domestic concerns. There is then a concluding chapter for the 1970s as with direct elections complete in 1979, the European Parliament rapidly evolves thus it is important to have a concluding chapter that discusses the themes of the European Parliament prior to direct elections as the decisions made in the period from 1973 to 1979 shaped the future of the European Parliament.

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<sup>104</sup> These committees covered issues including Northern Ireland, the Falklands, the Community budget, and the powers of the European Parliament. All of the topics mentioned were very significant to the Conservative Party during the period being discussed.

Section three addresses the Conservative Party and MEPs in the period from 1980 to 1985 and is broken down into three chapters. The first shows the significant impact the 1982 European Parliament presidency election has on the relationship between the European Democratic Group (EDG) and the European Peoples Party (EPP). The second chapter displays how the EDG expanded their grouping size through gaining Spanish MEPs. The third chapter discusses the 1983 general election and the relationship between MEPs and MPs through examining two reports commissioned by the European Parliament, the Northern Ireland report and the Falklands report.

Section four explores the period from 1986-1992 and is broken into three chapters. The first chapter will show how the Single European Act was passed and later the Maastricht Treaty. It will examine the role of the MEPs and how these two treaty ratifications increased the powers of the European Parliament. The second chapter addresses Thatcher's resignation and it will demonstrate how John Major was able to quickly and effectively work with MEPs during the Maastricht negotiations. The final chapter will explore the merger between the EDG and EPP, showing the small window of opportunity in which, the merger could occur.

## **Background Chapter 1961-73: Applications to the EEC**

To understand Conservative attitudes from 1973 onwards, it is important to assess the first application under Harold Macmillan. The history of the Conservatives and the Community in the 1960s rests significantly on why the first application was made, and the divisions it created within the party. The following background chapter will examine briefly the three applications and highlight the importance of Heath's Europeanism that affected the Conservative Party from 1965. During this period Britain had to balance its interests between the US, the Commonwealth and Europe which caused internal division in the Conservative Party.

The EEC in this period would undergo many changes and these changes began in the early 1960s when French industrialists became more supportive of the EEC. Initially, this group opposed integration, fearing that German industry would flood French markets with cheaper goods making French industry uncompetitive.<sup>105</sup> However, French industrialists changed their stance, as by 1960 they understood that they would have to inevitably work with Germany and other states. Due to this, French industrialists started working on joint production and marketing agreements with companies in the Benelux states and Germany. However, the French industrialists who were quickly becoming committed to integration grew frustrated at the cautious pace integration was taking place.<sup>106</sup> The French industrialists in this period would become a main pressure group for the accelerated development of the EEC.

A vital factor in this was the European Commission in its role as a broker, responsible for attaining German and French rapprochement. The key figures in this process of heightened cooperation were Walter Hallstein, the President of the Commission, and Sicco Mansholt, the

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<sup>105</sup> W. Loth, *Crises and Compromises: The European Project 1963-1969*, (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2001), p.254.

<sup>106</sup> S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain and the Community*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.32.

senior vice-president of the Commission, who was heavily involved in integration and agriculture. Wilfrid Loth has observed that the two ensured that both France and Germany benefited from these new arrangements.<sup>107</sup> There was an industrial common market that would benefit Germany, and a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), established by the Commission, which would greatly benefit France. Despite the efforts made by the Commission, ultimately it was the willingness of member states to make the EEC a success that drove integration.<sup>108</sup> During the early 1960s, Macmillan was supported by the Federation of British Industry (FBI) in efforts to ensure that the European Free Trade Association ((EFTA) was a success.<sup>109</sup> Neil Rollings argues that the FBI consistently lobbied for integration during this period as it feared European businesses would surpass British businesses.<sup>110</sup> Macmillan was thus preoccupied with both making EFTA work and repairing the Anglo-American relationship due to the aftermath of the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956.<sup>111</sup>

Meanwhile, France, now under De Gaulle's leadership, began to take a lead on European integration. De Gaulle believed a strong European Community could act as a 'third force' in world politics. He determined that France should gain control over the Community's foreign policy. His policy led to the Fouchet plan being tabled in 1961, which proposed cooperation on foreign policy and human rights.<sup>112</sup> During this period, De Gaulle also attempted to form closer links to West Germany through developing a relationship with Chancellor Adenauer. However, the Benelux states began to grow suspicious of France fearing they were attempting to take control over the Community. George Wilkes suggests it marked a

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<sup>107</sup> W. Loth, pp.18-22.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> EFTA was a free trading bloc of nations consisting of Britain, Denmark, Austria, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and Norway. The main difference between the EFTA and EEC was that EFTA did not have external custom tariffs. See Crowson, p.21-27.

<sup>110</sup> N. Rollings, *British Business in the Formative Years of European Integration 1945–1973*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 73.

<sup>111</sup> For a detailed account of the Suez Canal Crisis see A. Gorst, and L. Johnman, *The Suez Crisis*, (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>112</sup> W. Loth, *Crises and Compromises: The European Project 1963-1969*, pp.31-57.

significant point, as the Benelux states began to strongly favour British membership as Britain could provide an alternative view to the Franco-German alliance.<sup>113</sup> Moreover, in 1961 Britain had for the first time began exporting more to the Community than the Commonwealth.<sup>114</sup>

As EEC countries outperformed Britain's economy and in a bid to repair the relationship with America, Macmillan considered applying for membership, although he felt 'chances are against an agreement.... unless de Gaulle changes his mind.'<sup>115</sup> In 1960, Macmillan was aware that the EEC was moving forward without Britain. The situation was exacerbated by the US, which became more supportive of the EEC, providing it with loans to assist with deeper integration. Macmillan responded and asked Whitehall departments in 1960 to determine the cost of adhering to the Treaty of Rome. Piers Ludlow suggests Macmillan's request alone deepened divisions over the Community in the Cabinet.<sup>116</sup> To ease tensions, Macmillan suggested a step-by-step approach to examine the EEC. He also reshuffled his Cabinet to reflect a more European stance. Duncan Sandys moved to the Commonwealth Relations Department. Christopher Soames was moved to agriculture (the CAP, from the onset of the first EEC application, was clearly going to be controversial). Heath was put in charge of European affairs and was made the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Lord Privy Seal. After Heath's preliminary discussion with the Six he concluded that they would not be prepared to accept Britain as an associate member of the EEC.<sup>117</sup> The Six were adamant that Britain adhere to the Treaty of Rome. Because of this, Macmillan reluctantly secured approval from both EFTA and the Commonwealth in mid-1961 to approach the EEC.

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<sup>113</sup> G. Wilkes, ed., *Britain's Failure to Enter the European Community 1961-63: The Enlargement Negotiations and Crises in European, Atlantic and Commonwealth Relations* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), p.142.

<sup>114</sup> A. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51*, (California: University of California Press, 1984), p.1-9.

<sup>115</sup> H. Macmillan, *Tides of Fortune 1945-1955*, (London: Macmillan, 1969), p.63.

<sup>116</sup> P. Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain: The Six and the First UK Application to the EEC*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.12.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, p.18.

John Young comments on how Macmillan's announcement for applying was 'surprisingly lacklustre'.<sup>118</sup> Piers Ludlow suggests the application was a historic turning point as it 'signalled the culmination of a lengthy British policy change' dating back to 1950s.<sup>119</sup> Others such as Nicholas Crowson argued that it was not as significant, believing the application 'a defensive rear-guard action of a government that was quickly running out of ideas.'<sup>120</sup> Regardless, the decision to apply began to divide the party as described in Nicholas Crowson's account, which notes that scepticism was centred on a quartet consisting of Derek Walker-Smith, Robin Turton, Peter Walker and Lord Hinchinbrooke.<sup>121</sup> The quartet still maintained that Britain had a global role to play beyond the Community and feared the effects membership would have on the Commonwealth.

The British European delegation, led by Heath, attempted to address this concern through securing concessions for the Commonwealth and a twelve to fifteen-year transitional period to ease the pressure on British trade. In his work, Alan Milward highlights the importance of 1962, as it was then and not in 1961 that the government acknowledged the Commonwealth could no longer be central to Britain's national strategy.<sup>122</sup> The situation was exacerbated in late December 1962 when the US Secretary of State Dean Acheson stated that 'Britain had lost an Empire and not yet found a role'.<sup>123</sup> Macmillan responded that this struck a raw nerve. The first application was eventually quashed by Charles De Gaulle, who vetoed it in 1963, as he believed that Britain would press its agenda and that of the US agenda in the Community.<sup>124</sup> Piers Ludlow has demonstrated how De Gaulle convinced fellow member states to reject Britain's application. This was particularly in relation to the European

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<sup>118</sup> J. W. Young, p.76.

<sup>119</sup> P. Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain: The Six and the First UK Application to the EEC*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.12.

<sup>120</sup> R.T. Griffiths, S. Ward, eds., *Courting the Common Market*, (London: Lothian Foundation Press, 1996), p.7.

<sup>121</sup> N.J. Crowson, p.122.

<sup>122</sup> A. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51*, p.1-9.

<sup>123</sup> D. Brinkley, 'Dean Acheson and the "Special Relationship": The West Point Speech of December 1962', *Historical Journal*, 33.3 (1990), 599-608.

<sup>124</sup> P. Mangold, *The Almost Impossible Ally: Harold Macmillan and Charles de Gaulle* (London: Tauris, 2006).

Commission who agreed that British accession would strain the Community, especially as the CAP had begun to develop.<sup>125</sup> The 1961 application demonstrated a change from the norm for British foreign policy. However, James Ellison has argued that this application was significant for British foreign policy in terms of strategy as 'it represented a shift in British tactics to secure traditional goals.'<sup>126</sup> Regardless, the rejection of the application did provide more time for the Community to develop without British input.

The European Assembly had also developed as, by 1962, it was formally recognised as the European Parliament by its members.<sup>127</sup> The name change was for consistency as in the four languages of the Community it was referred to variously as an Assembly and a Parliament. Specifically, in French it was referred to as the *Assemblée parlementaire européenne* and in Italian as the *Assemblea parlamentara*, both referring to it as an 'Assembly'. However, in Dutch it was *Europees Parlement* and in German as the *Europäische Parlament*, thus referring to it as a Parliament. So, in the period from its first sitting in 1958 to 1962 it was called both an Assembly and a Parliament depending on the language.<sup>128</sup> Thus, in March 1962, to ensure consistency it was announced that the institution would formally be recognised as the European Parliament. However, it was not until 1987 that the name change was officially sanctioned.<sup>129</sup> Despite this, it was not a matter of contention as, by the 1970s, all member states referred to the institution as the European Parliament. Yet the flaws of indirectly electing officials were also becoming apparent, particularly for France and Italy, where both governments were unwilling to send a proportionate number of opposition parties

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<sup>125</sup> P. Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain: The Six and the First UK Application to the EEC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.147-54.

<sup>126</sup> J. Ellison, 'Accepting the Inevitable: Britain and European Integration', in W. Kaiser and G. Staerck (eds), *British Foreign Policy, 1955-64: Contracting Options*, (London: Macmillan, 2000), pp.171-190.

<sup>127</sup> J.M. Palayret, *Building Parliament: 50 Years of European Parliament History 1958-2008*, (Belgium: European Communities, 2009), pp.14-18.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid. Yet as will be seen in subsequent chapters those who opposed the development of the European Parliament would continue to refer to it as an 'assembly'.



as representatives.<sup>130</sup> Moreover, both governments declined sending MEPs from parties that were staunchly anti-EEC which meant Italy would not send any representatives from its Communist Party until 1969 and France would not send any Communist Party members until 1973.

In 1964 a general election in Britain was held which saw Labour led by Harold Wilson return to Number Ten with a narrow majority of five. Peter Dorey remarks that Wilson was the youngest Prime Minister of the century and brought with him innovative ideas intended to bring Britain out of perceived economic difficulties.<sup>131</sup> He created the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) and the Ministry of Technology. It is argued by John Young, however, that Wilson took a more pragmatic stance towards the Community.<sup>132</sup> His tactical approach (as it was for Macmillan) was intended to avoid internal conflict in his government and party. An important moment for the government came when, in the summer of 1966, it was forced to abandon its policy for an economic National Plan. David Reynolds suggests that through a series of weekend seminars for Cabinet members, by 1967 Wilson had worn down the opposition to the point that Labour could support a second application.<sup>133</sup> Government members such as Tony Benn (later a prominent opponent of EEC membership) wished to see 'Imperial Britain' become 'Industrial Britain.'<sup>134</sup>

There was also strong support from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) for Britain to apply for membership.<sup>135</sup> It had begun to feel that British business was being surpassed in the fields of technology and industry. Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) was also strongly in favour of working with the EEC believing a closer relationship with Germany could improve

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid, pp.21-23.

<sup>131</sup> P. Dorey, ed., *The Labour Government 1964-70*, (London: Routledge, 2006), p.7. Joining the EEC was also part of Labour's modernisation project.

<sup>132</sup> J.W. Young, p.131.

<sup>133</sup> D. Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the 20th Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (London: Routledge, 2000), p.114.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> N. Rollings, p.55-83.

Britain's industrial position.<sup>136</sup> The decision for the second application was also an important moment as its legacy allowed the third attempt to be successful. Helen Parr has observed that the 1967 application was significant.<sup>137</sup> It provided a change in Wilson's tactics in negotiations. Wilson made the idea of joining more acceptable at Westminster and wanted fewer concessions from the Community. The application was also vital from a Community perspective as it garnered support from the European Commission for British accession.

During this time Edward Heath had also become the leader of the Conservative Party. It was written of Heath that, unlike any British leader, he shared a vision similar to the founding fathers of the Community.<sup>138</sup> Yet upon becoming the leader of the party, he also had to manage its Eurosceptic wing and made Enoch Powell Shadow Minister of Defence. It is observed by Nicholas Crowson that Heath 'reignited' the European debate in the party citing that in the annual party conference there were 24 resolutions from pro-Europeans alone. Moreover, the conference endorsed the desire to seek British membership by 1,452 votes to 475.<sup>139</sup> Even opponents of membership became more receptive to the idea as seen by Enoch Powell's commentary in 1970. Powell along with Ridley wrote a pamphlet entitled 'One Europe'. Ian Gilmour suggests that today the pamphlet 'would be considered federalist',<sup>140</sup> and argues that Powell, like other Conservative MPs, understood that Britain's future would lay in membership. However, opposition within the Conservative and Labour Party still existed. In his account, Chris Gifford explores in detail the role of the Anti-Common Market League and the role it played from the first bid to join the Community under Macmillan

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> H. Parr, *Britain's Policy towards the European Community: Harold Wilson and Britain's World Role, 1964-1967*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), pp.114-133.

<sup>138</sup> D. Baker, D. Seawright, ed., *Britain for and against Europe*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.1.

<sup>139</sup> Crowson, p.34.

<sup>140</sup> I. Gilmour and M. Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories: The Conservatives since 1945*, (London: Fourth Estate, 1997), p.229.

remained active.<sup>141</sup> The divisions described above shows why cross-party alliances were formed.

Yet there was much dispute and development between the Six in the period 1965 to 1967 that made Britain's application more difficult. Stephen George observes that during this period, De Gaulle continued with his policy of attempting to integrate the Six quickly, which in turn would entail applicants to the EEC having to adhere to stricter rules.<sup>142</sup> The new rules would make accession for Britain more difficult and provide France with a clearer leadership role in the Community. De Gaulle, however, rejected the idea of political integration fearing loss of sovereignty for national parliaments. Sovereignty was the crux of the problems during the mid-1960s for the Community. By 1965 the first stage of economic integration was nearing completion. The two major achievements of the first round of integration were the agreements of a common external tariff and a common agricultural policy.<sup>143</sup> There were still concerns over the budget and how it should be financed. Since the Community was created, the member states had provided funds for the EEC. But in 1965 the Council proposed that an automatic funding mechanism should be created.<sup>144</sup> It would also mean that money from the levy on imported agricultural products and the common external tariff would become the EEC's own resource. Member states would be able to keep a small sum from the tariffs to cover the cost of collection.

Germany and the Benelux states wanted some measure of democratic control over the budget, thus it was recommended that the European Parliament gain powers over the budget. The proposal was the first time it was suggested that the European Parliament extend its power. The Dutch Parliament felt particularly strongly on this matter and had been a strong advocate

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<sup>141</sup> See, C. Gifford., *Making of Eurosceptic Britain*, (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), pp.55-70.

<sup>142</sup> S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain and the Community*, p.32.

<sup>143</sup> See Dinan, p.16-34.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

for the European Parliament since it had been founded, believing it could be used to counterbalance the Franco-German alliance in the Council.<sup>145</sup> Hence, the Netherlands was in favour of the European Parliament gaining budgetary powers. However, De Gaulle did not approve, feeling it was a significant step towards supranationalism. Due to this, De Gaulle withdrew from the Council of Minister meetings, stalling the completion of the first stage of integration as the Treaty of Rome stated that upon completion of the first stage of integration the Community should move to a majority voting system. De Gaulle did not want majority voting as it would diminish France's role in the Community. After negotiations it was decided that countries would maintain their veto under what became known as the 'Luxembourg Compromise'. De Gaulle did not stop there as he had a list of other demands that he wanted addressed before he re-entered the Community.

The most significant requirement was that publicity of the Community should not be handled by the Commission alone. De Gaulle wanted Community publicity to be jointly approved by the President of the Council and the President of the Commission.<sup>146</sup> The actions of De Gaulle's demands damaged the Community's morale and led to a loss of momentum. The situation was exacerbated as De Gaulle vetoed Wilson's application in 1967. Simon Holt argues that the rejection occurred as De Gaulle suspected Britain would act to support the US within the Community. Holt also argues that the devaluation of Sterling and accepting the CAP would be too big a burden on Britain.<sup>147</sup> Uwe Kitzinger suggests that the application was bound to fail until French attitudes towards British accession changed.<sup>148</sup> Piers Ludlow also points to the importance of the second rejection by De Gaulle as it came at a time where

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<sup>145</sup> R. Soetendorp, *Foreign Policy in the European Union*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), p.35.

<sup>146</sup> S. Holt, 'Policymaking in Practice: The 1965 crisis', in J. Barber and B. Reed, eds, *European Community: Vision and Reality* (London: Croom Helm, 1973), pp. 63-77.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> U. Kitzinger, *The Second Try*, (Oxford: Pergamon, 1968), p.14.

East and West relations were highly contentious.<sup>149</sup> Yet Ludlow also suggests that the second application had significance as the Benelux states who were in favour of British accession grew more vocal on the subject.<sup>150</sup> The second application was important in shaping the third application made under Heath. Moreover, no decision on the European Parliament gaining control of the budget was taken during this period of stalled integration.

A major change also came in April 1969 when De Gaulle resigned as French president. He stood down following his failure to win a referendum to endorse the French Senate. This led to an election that saw Georges Pompidou become president. It marked a major breakthrough for both the EEC and Britain as De Gaulle had become an obstacle regarding Community development and enlargement. Thus Pompidou's election spurred another attempt at EEC enlargement. Uwe Kitzinger argues that this was because of pressure placed on him by other member states (namely the Benelux countries).<sup>151</sup> Other historians such as Stephen George suggest that Pompidou had decided to make steps towards enlargement because the smaller French parties who ensured his election victory lobbied for enlargement.<sup>152</sup> Moreover, De Gaulle's death on 9 November 1970 also allowed Pompidou to pursue policy more freely. Yet the proposal for enlargement to be reconsidered was already decided weeks prior to the French election.

German Chancellor Willy Brandt had publicly announced that a conference at the Hague would be held to consider the issue. Enlargement was also spurred on by the French economy. Since the mid-1960s economic growth had slowed dramatically. De Gaulle had aggravated this problem as his refusal to devalue the Franc had left French goods uncompetitive. Hence Pompidou upon becoming president immediately devalued the

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<sup>149</sup> P. Ludlow, *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965-1973*, (London: Routledge, 2006), p.36.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> U. Kitzinger, *Diplomacy and Persuasion: How Britain Joined the Common Market*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), p.67.

<sup>152</sup> S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain and the Community*, pp.33-65.

Franc.<sup>153</sup> He also wanted to widen the EEC market and was open to the idea of Community enlargement. Yet the Community was keen to ratify the issues around the budget before negotiations for enlargement began.<sup>154</sup> The Community was motivated by De Gaulle's previous hostility towards the European Parliament having control of the budget. The Community had finessed this issue in a way that meant France would gain the most from the budget while contributing a small amount and with potential member states such as Britain having to contribute a larger sum. Because of this France agreed to allow the European Parliament to have control over the budget. This officially completed the first round of integration that provided the European Parliament with a meaningful power. It was also decided that steps to enlarge the Community would be taken. Lastly, it was decided that economic and monetary union would be pursued simultaneously. Economic policy coordination could be made through the activity of existing committees; monetary union could be pursued by linking together the exchange rates of the member states within narrow bands to limit fluctuations.<sup>155</sup> The Hague talks had concluded all three outstanding Community issues, and the EEC opened negotiations with Britain for accession.

By April 1970 the European Parliament's powers had also slightly increased with the signing of the Luxembourg Treaty. This treaty proposed a new revenue structure for the Community. Since the signing of the Treaty of Rome, the Community had been financed by the direct contributions of its member states, in a similar way to other international organisations. However, the Treaty of Rome had left open the opportunity to finance the Community through 'other resources'.<sup>156</sup> Thus the treaty made possible the gathering of Community resources through three means: the Community's agricultural levies, the common customs

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> L. Tsoukalis, *The Politics and Economics of European Monetary Integration* (London: Weidenfeld, 1973), p.240.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 247.

<sup>156</sup> European Parliament Archive, Treaty of Rome article 216, 25 March 1957, p.74.

duties, and a fixed rate based on VAT. The issue caused tensions amongst member states, as the Community's own resources gave it financial autonomy that could not be governed by the national parliaments of member states. Member states feared the federalist direction in which the Community could move. Hence, to address this concern the preamble of the Luxembourg Treaty called for 'the strengthening of the budgetary powers of the European Parliament'.<sup>157</sup> The treaty proposed that the European Parliament could amend the Community's 'non-compulsory' budget. Compulsory expenditure was of greater significance as it encompassed 'spending on those policies that arose out of the founding treaties and their amendments' which included the CAP.<sup>158</sup> Non-compulsory expenditure were matters that fell outside this remit.<sup>159</sup> The loose definition would cause great tension between the European Parliament and COM. The Luxembourg Treaty outlined the steps for the budget. First, the Commission would write a draft of the budget which would be deliberated between the Commission and COM. It would then be given to the European Parliament to make its amendments to non-compulsory expenditure. The COM could further amend these changes, and then finally the European Parliament President would formally adopt the budget. This last step was critical as it gave the European Parliament the final word on the budget, a significant power, as it could potentially delay the entire budget.

In 1970 a UK general election was held which saw Edward Heath and the Conservatives defeat Labour, and return to power with a majority of 31.<sup>160</sup> Heath was a driving force for British accession and a decision to enter the EEC was carried in Parliament in 1971.<sup>161</sup> Stephen Wall has commented that 'Heath was the only post-war PM that shared the same

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<sup>157</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Luxembourg Treaty, 22 April 1970.

<sup>158</sup> L. McGowan and D. Phinnemore, *A Dictionary of the European Union*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, (London: Routledge, 2015), p.53.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, non-compulsory spending totalled about three per cent of the overall budget in 1970.

<sup>160</sup> R. Blake, *The Conservative Party from Peel to Thatcher*, (London: Fantana Publishers, 1985), p.323.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, p.315.

views as the original Six'.<sup>162</sup> However, Stephen George has attempted to suggest that Heath's outlook towards the Community was no different to other leaders.<sup>163</sup> Regardless, Heath appointed Anthony Barber (who was the Chancellor of the Exchequer from June 1970 to March 1974) to lead negotiations for Britain. Barber remarked early on that he was disappointed that the Community had rejected the budget without consulting Britain. This was a decision that would affect Britain's relationship with the EEC for years to come. Heath pressed forward with negotiations and attempted to persuade member states that Britain was truly willing to become part of the EEC. As part of this approach Britain had joined the Snake in April 1972.<sup>164</sup> The Snake originated from the Barre Report in 1969 which advocated the tying together of member-states' exchange rates within narrow bands. British membership of the Snake, however, did not last long owing to international economic problems.<sup>165</sup> The Bank of England was unable to maintain parity of Sterling and withdrew from the arrangement, as would other member states eventually. Regardless, this episode was still seen by member states as evidence that Britain was willing to make an effort to be part of the Community. Britain eventually acceded to the Community in 1973. They were the second largest contributor to the EEC budget behind Germany, had to impose a Value Added Tax (VAT) on goods worth eight per cent, and could no longer benefit from Commonwealth trade.<sup>166</sup> Thus many have argued that Britain joined on relatively unsatisfactory terms, which was inevitable given the compromises it had to make regarding its arrangements with the Commonwealth.<sup>167</sup>

Opposition to the Community remained amongst Conservative MPs as many had feared that Britain would indeed enter on unsatisfactory terms and damage the British economy.

Moreover, as negotiations progressed, the number of Conservative MPs against membership

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<sup>162</sup> S. Wall, *Stranger in Europe: Britain and the EU from Thatcher to Blair*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.3.

<sup>163</sup> Georges, *An Awkward Partner: Britain and the Community*, p.117.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, p.128.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>166</sup> See S. Wall, *Official History*, pp.405-457.

<sup>167</sup> See N.J. Crowson, pp.45-71, or J.W. Young, pp.107-136.



increased. Geoffrey Howe, who was the Solicitor-General responsible for drafting the European Economic Communities Bill, told the House of Commons that ‘the Communities were a dynamic organisation that would evolve and continue to evolve’.<sup>168</sup> His comments added to the Eurosceptic Conservative MPs fears of a federalist Community. In his study, Philip Norton states that there were approximately 30 MPs who opposed membership since 1961, and suggests that by the time of accession the number increased to 50 and that ‘there were a number of others that were uncertain about membership’.<sup>169</sup> Thus even having agreed to membership there were still those who were sceptical of Britain’s future in the community.

Heath did attempt to secure a deal to safeguard trade with the Commonwealth, particularly with regards to New Zealand, the budget contribution and fisheries. He had to accept the CAP and the budget as both these matters were decided prior to negotiations. The European Parliament’s control over the budget was another development Britain could not challenge. Yet David Hannay, amongst others, has argued that regarding fisheries, the exclusive boundaries around Britain’s shores should have been further extended.<sup>170</sup> Heath did secure some arrangements for New Zealand ensuring a transitional period allowing Britain to import dairy products. Hence, the Conservatives under Heath entered a Community which had already made steps to deepen integration. Much of the literature regarding the third application has centred on Heath, John Young has stated that Heath’s ‘enthusiasm for the EEC over the US alliance was unique’.<sup>171</sup> Whilst Stephen George has argued that Heath was no different compared to other Prime Ministers.<sup>172</sup> Yet others such as Andrew Geddes suggests the importance of Pompidou replacing De Gaulle had allowed British accession to

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<sup>168</sup> *Hansard*, HC. vol. 831, col. 650 17 February 1972.

<sup>169</sup> P. Norton, *Conservative Dissidents: Dissent within the Parliamentary Conservative Party, 1970-74* (London: Temple Smith, 1978), p.105.

<sup>170</sup> See European University Institute, Archives of the EU, INT172, David Hannay Interview, 7 September 2011. Or N.J. Crowson, pp.45-71.

<sup>171</sup> J.W. Young, *Britain and European Unity 1945–92*, (New York, Macmillan, 1992), p.127.

<sup>172</sup> S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain and the Community*, p.117.

succeed on the third attempt.<sup>173</sup> Furthermore, the European Parliament had also changed over this period and gained powers over the budget. The Conservatives under Heath had acceded to the Community and were more pro-European than previous Conservative administrations. However, earlier in the post-war era the Conservatives had consistently made steps to work with Europe. Furthermore, internally there were generational shifts in the cohort of Conservative MPs which dated back to the 1950s during a time European institution regularly evolved and changed which caused more complexities in the internal attitudes of the Conservative MPs towards European integration. Despite this by 1972 the foundation of the Community was firmly cemented in a Franco-German alliance, an alliance Britain had to contend with since the Schuman Plan was proposed in 1950, and would continue to do so throughout the period this thesis covers.

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<sup>173</sup> A. Geddes, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Party since 1945*, (London: Palgrave, 2003), p.58.

## **Section One: British MEPs 1973-79**

By 1973 the powers of the European Parliament remained limited, despite acquiring control over the Community budget. Its greatest power in theory, though unlikely to be deployed in practice, was the ability to dismiss the European Commission through a two-thirds majority vote. The European Parliament was not a strong Community institution at the time and many, including the British Conservatives, wanted to increase its influence. MEPs, who were nominated, not directly elected, felt that if direct elections could be achieved the European Parliament would gain more influence and credibility. The issue of direct elections dominated this period until they took place in 1979.

The Conservatives initially sent twenty representatives to the European Parliament. Although Britain was allocated 36 seats, sixteen remained empty as the Labour Party did not send representatives. British Conservative MEPs were selected by Heath and many were pro-European. They held a 'dual mandate' meaning they held positions in the Westminster Parliament and the European Parliament. Despite this making the role of the MEPs challenging, it provided a method of communication between MEPs and MPs which ensured both could work together. The British Conservative delegation in this period created an independent grouping rather than sitting with the Christian Democrats (CD), the centre-right grouping of the European Parliament, and the decision to sit independently would have a lasting impact on the relationship between the two groupings. Many MEPs also enjoyed access to senior figures in the Conservative Party including Heath himself, a luxury MEPs after the Heath premiership did not have.

This section will show that the MEPs had limited success in the European Parliament, as the Community's developments were driven by other Community institutions and member state

governments. Moreover, under Heath and later Thatcher, the MEPs continued to work with the Conservative leadership despite some feeling disillusioned with Westminster.

## Chapter One: The Formation of the European Conservatives

The following chapter will examine what the MEPs did in the unelected European Parliament. It will examine how Heath selected MEPs, the decision the MEPs took to form an independent grouping, the early positive contributions MEPs made including the introduction of a new question time and will discuss the legacy of a document published in the European Parliament, the Vedel report. The formation of an independent grouping has been discussed in the literature as Zig Layton-Henry suggests that opposition from Italian and Belgian MEPs in the CDs prevented the British Conservatives from joining the grouping in 1973 whilst Caroline Jackson correctly points that there were other groupings that the British Conservative MEPs could join such as the Gaullists.<sup>174</sup> However, this chapter will show in greater detail that a combination of financial incentives and the desire by both British Conservative MEPs and Heath to make a distinct contribution to the European Parliament led to the MEPs forming an independent grouping and this thesis will demonstrate the lasting impact of the decision. Moreover, the chapter will highlight that there were a number of groupings the British Conservative MEPs could have potentially joined. It will also establish the concerns MPs had over the cost of MEPs and the effect this had on the relationship between the two. The chapter will reveal that communications between the Conservative Party and its MEPs were stronger because the dual mandate (though onerous) provided a method of clear communication.

1973 was a turbulent year for the Conservative Party and the MEPs. Members were nominated and held a dual mandate which despite its benefits also made the job of a MEP demanding. However, the Conservatives sent a full complement of MEPs that were nominated by Heath who had taken the advice of the Conservative Whips, Heath personally

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<sup>174</sup> See: Z. Layton-Henry, *Conservative Politics in Western Europe*, (London: Palgrave, 1982), p.340. Or C. Jackson, 'The First British MEPs: Styles and Strategies', *Contemporary European History*, 2.2 (1993), 169-95.

wanted to send a diverse and credible delegation, whilst the Conservative Whips favoured candidates with previous experience in working in Europe.<sup>175</sup> Labour, for which continued UK membership of the EEC was an open question at the time, opted not to send representatives as in the period of 1973-75 the European Parliament was a very sensitive matter for the Labour Party and they feared sending representatives would create more internal divisions.<sup>176</sup> Labour's decision provided the Conservatives with a unique opportunity to press their policies in the European Parliament. The Conservatives immediately had to decide which grouping they wanted to join. They could have potentially joined the Gaullists, the Christian Democrats Group (CDs), or the European Progressive Democrats (EPD). They decided instead to create their own Conservative grouping marking the first major decision taken by the British delegation.<sup>177</sup> The matter had been discussed at some length in the Conservative Research Department (CRD), as well as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as it was linked to the cost of MEPs.<sup>178</sup> The eventual decision taken to sit independently would have a lasting impact on the MEPs throughout the period from 1973 to 1992, particularly concerning the relationship between the British Conservatives and the CDs. The decision would also isolate the Conservative MEPs as they were seen as a small and non-diverse grouping which limited what they could achieve in the European Parliament.

In 1973 however, it was assumed by many in the European Parliament that the Conservatives would sit with the CDs, one of the largest groupings in the European Parliament, with strong ideological links to the British Conservatives. Moreover, Peter Kirk (Chairman of the Conservative delegation to the European Parliament) and the other Conservative MEPs had close personal ties with the CDs. It was felt by MEPs, including Hugh Dykes, that 'this was

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<sup>175</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/7/2, Common Market, European Parliament Candidates, 15 November 1972.

<sup>176</sup> Labour Party Archives (LPA), LRCC, 10/211, PLP Liaison Committee minutes, 11 June 1975.

<sup>177</sup> TNA, PREM 15/2071, P. Kirk letter to Heath UK delegation to the European Parliament, 31 January 1973.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid or see Bodleian Library, CRD 3/10/2/12, Europe General, 1969-70.

the natural home' for the delegation.<sup>179</sup> Dykes highlighted that British Conservative MEPs had direct contact with the CDs through conferences, youth movements and inter-party meetings.<sup>180</sup> Another potential choice was the European Liberals who were more centre-right than the British Liberal Party. The other possibility for the Conservative delegation was to side with the European Progressive Democrats (EPD).<sup>181</sup> The EPD was formed in 1965 after a faction of the Gaullist liberal grouping split, and on 16 January 1973 the EPD was officially named and recognised in the European Parliament, which was timely for British accession. The EPD also shared a similar view to the British Conservative Party regarding the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), an issue at the forefront of British Conservative thought. However, both Douglas-Home and Kirk were reluctant to join the EPD. Their hesitancy stemmed from the issues surrounding some of its members, such as the Danish Conservative Kai Nyborg, who was facing an expenses scandal at the time. Kirk stated that 'apart from the doubts about Nyborg's personal reputation there is little common ground' between the EPD and the Conservative Party.<sup>182</sup> In 1972 Heath and Douglas-Home wanted to form their own Conservative group made up of British, Danish, and Norwegian Conservatives.<sup>183</sup> The idea was made very difficult as Norway opted not to join the EEC in 1973. The country had held a referendum on membership on 25 September 1972. It yielded a 52 per cent no vote, preventing Norwegian accession.<sup>184</sup> Despite the setback, a decision was made in 1973 that the Conservatives should still create their own Conservative grouping in the European Parliament. One of the main reasons for this decision was due to the financial incentives gained by creating an independent grouping. Creating a grouping gave each MEP in that grouping a subsidy of £2,500, and potentially a further subsidy for office staff which would

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<sup>179</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/7/2, Common Market, Miscellaneous papers, 1 January 1973.

<sup>180</sup> See Bodleian Library, CRD 3/10/2/12, Europe General 1969-70.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> TNA, PREM 15/2071, P, Kirk letter to Heath UK delegation to the European Parliament, 31 January 1973.

<sup>183</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 3/10/2/12, European Groupings Options, 18 March 1970.

<sup>184</sup> For more on the Norwegian referendum see, O, Osterud, ed., *Norway in Transition: Transforming a Stable Democracy*, (London: Routledge, 2013), chapter six.

be paid for by the European Parliament.<sup>185</sup> Moreover, as will be seen a key objective for Kirk and Heath was for the British Conservative MEPs to make a distinct contribution to the development of the European Parliament and an independent group provided this platform which was a large contributing factor to create an independent grouping. Yet other options were considered by the British Conservative MEPs. The decision to sit independently would ultimately have a lasting impact on the relationship between British Conservative MEPs and the CDs.

The new independent grouping consisted of twenty British Conservatives, two Danish Conservatives, and one Danish Liberal.<sup>186</sup> Peter Kirk and Douglas-Home believed that the Danish Conservatives had the most in common with the British Conservatives, and thus would be a good fit for the new Conservative Group. Kirk stated that the Danish MEP ‘[Erhard] Jakobsen is an experienced politician who would be an asset to the Conservative Group’.<sup>187</sup> The decision to sit independently has been briefly discussed in Zig Layton-Henry’s work who suggests that British MEPs sat independently due to opposition arising from Italian and Belgian CD members.<sup>188</sup> However, new archival material shows that a significant factor that led Heath’s government and Kirk were the financial incentives for forming a separate group, and for the desire for Heath and the British Conservative MEPs to make a distinctive contribution to the European Parliament.<sup>189</sup> The Foreign and Commonwealth Office believed that the financial incentives of an independent grouping would ease the burden of expenses for which the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was otherwise wholly responsible. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office had pointed out that it

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<sup>185</sup> For each MEP in the grouping the European Parliament provided a subsidy of £2,500, and potential provide a further subsidy for office staff. See, TNA, PREM 15/2071, P, Kirk letter to Heath UK delegation to the European Parliament, 31 January 1973.

<sup>186</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 3/10/2/12, European General 1969-70. See Appendix for more detail on British MEPs.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid. P. Kirk letter to Heath UK delegation to the European Parliament, 21 January 1973.

<sup>188</sup> Z. Leyton-Henry, *Conservative Politics in Western Europe*, (London: Palgrave, 1982), p.340.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.



would be ‘unsustainable to accommodate MEPs through the department’s costs’.<sup>190</sup> The issue of MEP costs needed to be addressed, as they were heavily scrutinised in the House of Commons even by fellow Conservatives. Neil Marten, (Conservative MP for Banbury) on one occasion asked James Prior, Leader of the House of Commons, ‘why the Committees of the European Assembly are meeting in Rome between 21 and 24 May; and what the extra cost is’.<sup>191</sup> In 1973 MP pay was also being considered as MPs received £4,500 per year in basic pay.<sup>192</sup> Formation of a group also provided organisational and financial independence as the British Conservatives received subsidies directly from the European Parliament; this did lead some MEPs to feel independent of the UK Parliament. Furthermore, MEPs at the time thought they could have a larger voice in the European Parliament and would be able to direct the group towards issues that the party prioritised. The decision was very significant in the long-term as it impacted relations with the CDs, who felt that the British Conservatives should have joined their grouping. The decision to sit independently was decided by the Conservative government, but MEPs, particularly Kirk, were consulted regularly and had often communicated with Heath on the matter.<sup>193</sup> The decision shows that there was clear communication and understanding between the MEPs and Westminster; the dual mandate allowed for this to occur. Additionally, Heath had selected the delegation personally taking into consideration the advice of the Conservative Whips.<sup>194</sup> Heath having input into the selecting of the delegation made working with the MEPs easier, a luxury Thatcher and Major would not have.

Within the UK allocation of MEPs, twenty were taken by the Conservatives. Heath also provided the opportunity for the Liberal Party to have two seats in the European Parliament.

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<sup>190</sup> TNA, FCO 30/269, The European Parliament, Costs and groupings of MEPs, 23 February 1973.

<sup>191</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb, the European Assembly, vol 855 cc197-8W, 19 April 1973.

<sup>192</sup> Parliamentary Archive, Members’ pay, pensions and allowances factsheet, 11 July 2011. It should be noted that an independent inquiry into MPs pay was being considered by the Top Salary Review Body in 1973 who concluded MPs should receive a pay increase from £4,500 to £8,000 per year.

<sup>193</sup> TNA, FCO 30/269, The European Parliament, Costs and groupings of MEPs, 23 February 1973.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

The Liberal Party selected Lord Gladwyn, who had held diplomatic posts in both France and the United Nations.<sup>195</sup> Their second seat went to Russell Johnston (MP for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber), the Liberal spokesman on foreign affairs in the House of Commons.<sup>196</sup> Additionally, as Britain was entitled to 36 seats and only twenty were occupied, Heath also allowed Lord O'Hagan (a crossbencher in 1973, he would from 1975 to 1994 be a Conservative MEP) to attend as an independent.<sup>197</sup> As well as enabling the Conservatives to dominate the UK presence in the European Parliament, the non-participation of Labour also made the Conservative Party appear positive about the Community, having led Britain into it, and participating in the European Parliament. Heath had worked closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to pick a delegation prior to accession.<sup>198</sup> He had wanted to pick a delegation that could support his pro-European agenda in the Community.<sup>199</sup> Yet he also wanted the delegation to reflect the Conservative Party's range of views towards the Community.<sup>200</sup> The Conservatives eventually decided to appoint Peter Kirk as the first head of the Conservative delegation to the EP.<sup>201</sup> Kirk was selected as he had been an active member of the Council of Europe during Harold Wilson's government of 1956-63.<sup>202</sup> He had also played a large role in the Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU), being on various committees including the Politico-Military Working Group (PMWG), Kirk had also served as Under-Secretary for Defence for the Royal Navy from 1970 to 1973, and was fluent in both French and German.<sup>203</sup> It was written of Kirk that he 'undoubtedly has a bigger

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> TNA, FCO 30/1234, European Parliament, 15 October 1972.

<sup>199</sup> For a detailed account on Edward Heath and Europe see P. Ziegler, *Edward Heath: The Authorised Biography*, (London: HarperPress, 2011).

<sup>200</sup> TNA, FCO 30/1234, potential selections of MEPs, 17 March 1972.

<sup>201</sup> In this period the leaders of the British Conservative delegation (Peter Kirk, James Scott-Hopkins, Henry Plumb, and Christopher Prout) were jointly leaders of the grouping (Initially the European Conservatives which would later become the European Democrat Grouping).

<sup>202</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/1/1, European Conservative Group Correspondence between Peter Kirk and Acting Chairman, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1973.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

reputation in Europe than he enjoys here' and that he was an ideal candidate.<sup>204</sup> Kirk also had a strong relationship with Heath, as both had 'pro-European instincts'.<sup>205</sup> Of the twenty eventual members that were selected to attend six were peers and fourteen were MPs. Eight of these members had government ministerial experience. All of the members had experience in the WEU or the Council of Europe. Heath had wanted to send experienced members to the European Parliament, to ensure member states saw British Conservatives taking the European Parliament seriously.<sup>206</sup> Yet there were some Conservatives who saw the European Parliament as a 'talking shop' with little significance, and remained hostile.<sup>207</sup> Thus, in this delegation were sceptics of the European Parliament such as Sir Derek Walker-Smith who had opposed entry outright. The issue of which members should be sent was decided prior to accession. Hostility towards the Community remained a consistent theme. In his work, George Wilkes supports this view as he examines in detail the 'outbursts of hostility towards the EEC'.<sup>208</sup> The selection of MEPs that opposed entering the Community in the grouping, however, demonstrates a more specific level of hostility aimed at the European Parliament which Wilkes does not discuss and is not examined in the literature. The delegation selected clearly had members who had strong European diplomatic experience, a decision that was engineered by Heath to legitimise the European Parliament as a serious institution of the Community. The selection of MEPs already shows that there would be a part of those sent that would not be supportive of membership. Heath had included these individuals (MEPs such as Walker-Smith) as he had to balance different wings within the Conservative Party

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<sup>204</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Times*, 'Peter Kirk', 7 November 1972.

<sup>205</sup> TNA, FCO 30/2068, Labour's views on Peter Kirk, 10 April 1974. 'Pro-European' in this thesis will refer to individuals who supported deeper integration and wanted to develop the European Parliament as a legitimate institute.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> See J. Lodge, 'The European Parliament after Direct Elections: Talking Shop or Putative Legislature?', *Journal of European Integration*, 5(3) (1982), pp.259-84.

<sup>208</sup> G. Wilkes, ed., *Britain's Failure to Enter the European Community 1961-63: The Enlargement Negotiations and Crises in European, Atlantic and Commonwealth Relations*, (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013).

demonstrating the early divisions that Community membership created specifically around the European Parliament.

The length of an MEP's appointment had not been set and in 1973 it was decided that the Conservatives 'do not need to take further action' on the matter.<sup>209</sup> It was also agreed that if an MP were to lose their seat they would retain their position as an MEP until a replacement was found.<sup>210</sup> Other areas of concern that the Conservative Party had not clarified were the salary and expenses of an MEP. Both issues would continue to cause strains within the Conservative Party throughout the period this thesis covers. In 1973, however, a temporary measure was put in place for expenses as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was tasked with meeting the Conservative delegation's transport costs.<sup>211</sup> The lack of clarity in these aspects of European policy was overlooked by the Heath administration. It was a very turbulent period for the government, as the issues with Northern Ireland and industrial relations were key areas of concern. Moreover, despite the accession agreement being reached in 1972, enlargement had never occurred before, making it impossible for the government or Community to be fully prepared.

The first time the British delegation took their seats in the hemicycle, there was enthusiasm amongst MEPs. They believed the British Conservatives would help to change and increase the powers of the EP. In her study of the first cohort of Conservative MEPs, Caroline Jackson suggests this was because European commentators believed that 'coming from a country with a strong parliamentary tradition, they would inject a new vitality into the proceedings'.<sup>212</sup> This was proved correct by Jackson, as the Conservative MEPs were supportive of the European Parliament, and wished to legitimise the European Parliament's role, although

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<sup>209</sup> TNA, CAB 170/84, Expenses of a MEP, 1 May 1973.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, Selection of MEPs, 15 August 1973.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> C. Jackson, 'The First British MEPs: Styles and Strategies', *Contemporary European History*, 2.2 (1993), 169-95.

Jackson's work does not discuss in great detail the MEPs desire to be a successful alternative centre-right grouping to the CD and contribute to the European Parliament's development throughout the period this thesis covers.<sup>213</sup> The Conservative MEPs started strongly and tabled a resolution and memorandum in their first session regarding the conduct and the process of procedure in the European Parliament, which they deemed at the time as 'excessively lengthy'.<sup>214</sup> However, the Conservatives misunderstood the degree of agreement within the European Parliament, particularly on the belief that the European Parliament's powers were insufficient.

Furthermore, steps had already been made to address this problem as the Commission had in 1972 set up a committee to assess the powers of the European Parliament. The committee was led by a French academic, George Vedel who was keen to increase the powers of the European Parliament and curtail those of the Commission. He believed this could be achieved by giving the European Parliament powers to approve the presidency of the Commission, as well as giving it powers to select Commissioners.<sup>215</sup> Additionally, Vedel's report recommended readdressing the legislative powers of the European Parliament. However, the report struggled to achieve change due to opposition from member states who wanted to keep much of the Community's power in the Council of Ministers.<sup>216</sup> An enhancement of the power of the European Parliament might suggest movement in a more federal direction for the EEC.<sup>217</sup> These member states did not want to see powers taken from national Parliaments and transferred to the European Parliament. As a result, little materialised from the Vedel report. Jean Blondel, Richard Sinnott, and Palle Svensson describe in depth the opposition to the European Parliament suggesting that 'the perception of a powerful European Parliament

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<sup>213</sup> TNA, CAB 170/84, Seating in the European Parliament, 15 February 1973.

<sup>214</sup> TNA, CAB 170/84, Conduct of European Assembly, 1 May 1973.

<sup>215</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Vedel Report, 25 March 1974.

<sup>216</sup> Opposition arose from Britain, Belgium, France, and Germany. See, UOP, European Integration Archive, Opposition to European Parliament powers, 5 March 1974.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

might be the perception of a threat rather than a promise of powers'.<sup>218</sup> Yet it should be noted that aspects of Vedel's report were eventually enforced in the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty, showing the long-term impact of certain European Parliament reports.

During the period 1973 to 1975 the British delegation took a more confrontational stance in some areas. The approach stemmed from the British parliamentary tradition which was characterised by confrontation, but also because the Conservatives wanted to start their tenure in the European Parliament strongly. However, they were unsuccessful as the European Parliament worked more slowly than the House of Commons. Kirk would later state that 'I am astounded at the impertinence of what we tried to do, and the forbearance with which our new colleagues received it'.<sup>219</sup> The approach also created tensions with other groupings. Furthermore, British members were often disillusioned as they felt that they could not depend upon their European counterparts in certain debates and votes.<sup>220</sup> Kirk wanted to bring the Community institutions (particularly the Council of Ministers and the Commission) to account and curtail the powers of the Council of Ministers (as advocated in Vedel's report).<sup>221</sup> He was especially passionate about this cause as he suggested that the 'Council of Ministers in theory was supposed to be controlled by national parliaments but now operates almost without control'.<sup>222</sup> Yet in early 1974, the Conservative Grouping in the European Parliament had little support from other groupings. They had issues with the CDs, who felt strongly that the delegation should have joined their grouping. Furthermore, the newly formed EPD was hesitant to side with the Conservative Group on a number of issues

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<sup>218</sup> J. Blondel, R. Sinnott, and P. Svensson, *People and Parliament in the European Union: Participation, Democracy, and Legitimacy*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.132.

<sup>219</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *Spectator*, P. Kirk, 'Britain's Imprint on Europe', 4 September 1976.

<sup>220</sup> CCA, CATH 243, Papers of Fredrick Catherwood, 1965-89. Being a small grouping they had to build relations with other groupings to ensure they would vote the way the Conservatives needed them to. This would be a long-term problem for the Conservatives until they joined the EPP in 1992.

<sup>221</sup> TNA, FCO 30/269, The European Parliament, Costs and groupings of MEPs, 23 February 1973.

<sup>222</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, Peter Kirk, article in *Conservative Monthly News*, 5 June 1973.

regarding parliamentary procedure,<sup>223</sup> showing again the effects of being in a small independent grouping.

The memorandum the Conservative Grouping had issued in its first session in Luxembourg proposed the creation of a special committee composed of academics and national parliamentarians. The committee would determine how the European Parliament could work more efficiently and deal with the strains brought with enlargement.<sup>224</sup> Kirk wanted to give the European Parliament more impetus, an outlook reflected in the memorandum. For example, the memorandum suggested that a new question time be introduced to the European Parliament which was similar to the House of Commons as, theoretically, intense debates would be held which could lead to clearer solutions to problems. If implemented it could speed up the overall decision-making process. The Conservative Grouping felt strongly on moving the committees away from working on very technical directives and towards considering long-term policymaking.<sup>225</sup> The memorandum also wanted committees to have powers of approval on the various areas they worked within, a power that was held by the Council of Ministers.<sup>226</sup> These changes in initiation and approval would, if implemented, place the European Parliament between both the Commission and Council of Ministers, making it a significant Community institution. Yet as suggested by Michael Shackleton, the European Parliament's powers in the early 1970s already showed that there was some mutual dependence between the European Parliament and the Commission through the power to dismiss the Commission through a two-thirds majority vote.<sup>227</sup> The more practical power the European Parliament held at the time was over the Community's budget. It had control over both the operational and the administrative budget, but the memorandum suggested that the

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> European Parliament Archive, PE 32.103 (BUR), Conservative Group Archive, European People's Party Office, European Parliament, Brussels, 5 January 1973.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid, Conservative Group Archive, European People's Party Office, Revised Memorandum of the Conservative Grouping, European Parliament, Brussels, 5 January 1974.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> R. Corbett, F. Jacobs, M. Shackleton, *The European Parliament*, (London, Catermill, 1999), pp.294-307.

effectiveness of this power was limited, and that the European Parliament would need powers to oversee the other Community institutions to understand better how the budget was spent.<sup>228</sup>

The report also develops Richard Corbett's conclusions which suggest that efforts were made more by large groupings such as the CD and the Socialists to increase the European Parliament's influence.<sup>229</sup> Yet the Conservative memorandum demonstrates that smaller groupings, such as that of the European Conservatives, contributed to the strategy which is not examined in the literature.

The Conservative Group memorandum had only limited short-term success as it was brought into the lengthy and slow processes of the European Parliament. As noted above, most of its suggestions had already been raised in the Vedel report, prior to British accession. Yet it was received by the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliament which led to the eventual re-examination of the procedural process for the European Parliament.<sup>230</sup> The memorandum was timely as enlargement meant more pressures and shorter timeframes to work within. Additionally, the Council of Ministers, which already worked faster than the European Parliament, was trying to streamline its own procedural process by limiting consultations with the Parliament. Kirk was particularly wary of the Council of Ministers, stating that it 'is one of the main brakes on future development'.<sup>231</sup> Hence, due to a combination of the developments of other institutions, enlargement, and the Vedel report, the memorandum had some success. Its most substantial contribution was that it highlighted the intent of the British Conservatives to change the European Parliament. The memorandum also showed that the Conservative delegation actively attempted to contribute to the development of the European Parliament.

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> R. Corbett, *The European Parliament's Role in Closer EU Integration*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp 230-255.

<sup>230</sup> European Parliament, document PE 32.103 (BUR), Conservative Group Archive, European People's Party Office, European Parliament, Brussels, 20 December 1973.

<sup>231</sup> TNA, BA 22/696, Kirk first year in European Assembly, 7 January 1973.



With the success of introducing a new question time the MEPs also began to play a regular part in European Parliament affairs. Many MEPs now held positions on two or more committees and played an active role in them.<sup>232</sup> Committee work was vital for the European Parliament as this was where the most important decisions were taken, more so than in the hemicycle. Being a small grouping, the Conservatives had to rely on votes from other groupings in committee work to influence decisions in the European Parliament. In committees Commissioners were also accessible and relationships could be built. The Conservative delegation worked on many committees throughout this period. The objective in 1974 was the same as in 1973. Kirk wrote that the aim was to make the 'Parliament more efficient while avoiding amendments to the treaties'.<sup>233</sup> Committee work was vital for the European Parliament throughout this period as it was where most of the European Parliament's work took place. This was also an 'important lesson for the Westminster Parliament whose committees were at that stage almost non-existent' demonstrating an important difference between the European Parliament and Westminster in terms of function.<sup>234</sup> It also shows an important background contribution to Norman St Stevas' parliamentary invocation of all-party select committees.

In January 1974 there was an issue regarding corporate mergers that highlighted the problems of being a small grouping. The Community sought approval of mergers between businesses valued at 1,000m units of accounts (£400 million).<sup>235</sup> There was much concern over this for the Conservative delegation as it would directly affect 40 per cent of the EEC businesses that were British.<sup>236</sup> The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) was deeply concerned as it had

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid, BA 22/696, British MEPs Committee engagements, 19 May 1973.

<sup>233</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/1/2 European Conservative Group Correspondence between Peter Kirk and Acting Chairman, 15 March 1974.

<sup>234</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner QC, 18 October 2016.

<sup>235</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Proposal for a Directive of the Council on Company Mergers, 14 January 1973.

<sup>236</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Times*, M. Hatfield, 'British MPs win Europe vote on mergers', 16 January 1974.

always felt that the opportunity for large mergers was one of the greatest advantages of membership.<sup>237</sup> On 15 January, the Conservatives led a move that forced the European Parliament to delay the report on European merger policy. John Peel, who was on the European Parliament economic affairs committee, stated that ‘the matter deeply concerned the UK’ and that ‘it should be given closer consideration’.<sup>238</sup> He suggested that if the Community had to approve mergers it would cause delays and make businesses reluctant to merge. The British Conservatives had narrowly gained a majority of two with support from the French Gaullists and the CDs. It was becoming clear that the Conservatives would in future have to rely heavily on votes from other groupings to achieve their desired result, which was a consequence of forming a small independent grouping. However, in mid-January the Conservative delegation failed to get a fundamental change to the merger policy due to opposition from the Socialist Grouping.<sup>239</sup> The failure showed the disadvantages of sitting as an independent group. The Conservative MEPs, until they joined the EPP in 1992, felt that much of their time was spent building relations.

Economic issues and the Community budget were large concerns for the European Parliament due to the energy crisis. In 1973 the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) imposed an embargo on oil which caused member states of the EEC to experience chronic economic difficulties.<sup>240</sup> The crisis led to member states such as France and Britain putting their own agendas ahead of the community, as they sought their own arrangements to compensate for the embargo, as demonstrated by the work of Larry Neal.<sup>241</sup>

Another concern was that the Community would have to combat inflation and ensure that

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<sup>237</sup> See N. Rollings, *British Business in the Formative Years of European Integration 1945–1973*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>238</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, John Peel report on European Parliament committee for Business Mergers, 15 January 1974.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> See E. Bini, G. Garavini, and F. Romero, *Oil Shock: The 1973 Crisis and its Economic Legacy*, (London: IB Tauris, 2016).

<sup>241</sup> L. Neal, *The Economics of Europe and the European Union*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008), p.257.

integration continued. The Conservative delegation believed integration could be maintained if the European Parliament had a larger role in the Community budget.<sup>242</sup> The European Conservatives on the Budget Committee were Lord Lothian and Michael Shaw who was the committee's rapporteur. Kirk wanted to develop the way the Community budget was structured. He believed there were many problems and struggled to understand 'how an international or supranational parliament, part-time – as we are bound to be – can effectively control the expenditure of this House and how a supranational executive can present a budget strategy rather than present a series of estimates for public expenditure.'<sup>243</sup> Kirk wanted the European Parliament to be a stronger consultative body on the budget. The CDs supported Kirk, believing that the European Parliament was very far from having adequate control over the budget. The CDs' Chairman had stated that 'for the Community to develop and be an effective counter-balance to the Commission ... it had to have stronger budgetary powers'.<sup>244</sup> The energy crisis highlighted how fragile the Community was as a whole, and the limited role of the European Parliament. It was seen by many in various national parliaments as a part-time assembly with little power. Many MEPs then began to believe direct elections presented an opportunity to legitimise the European Parliament.

The last contribution the European Conservatives made in 1974 was in September when they published the document 'Our Common Cause',<sup>245</sup> which assessed the Community and identified areas requiring improvement. Peter Kirk and Brendan Rhys Williams were primarily the authors of the document,<sup>246</sup> again showing the importance of Kirk being a driving force in the grouping. It highlighted the cumbersome processes of the Community, and how this could be changed if the European Parliament was stronger. It also stated the

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<sup>242</sup> European Parliament Archive, CGA European Conservative Group, The European Community, *Our Common Cause*, (Luxembourg: 3 December 1974).

<sup>243</sup> UOP, The European Integration Archive, Parliament in session European Parliament, 7 October 1974.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> *Our Common Cause*.

<sup>246</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO, 508/7/7 European Policy Committee minutes, 16 August 1974.

need to ‘rapidly move towards a European Union.’<sup>247</sup> It placed a large emphasis on the Community institutions and wanted the Council to move towards majority voting. Regarding economics, it argued that member states adopt the ‘Europa’ as a common currency.<sup>248</sup> The Europa would be used to stabilise capital and transactions across EEC countries. The document demonstrates the more federalist views of this particular delegation as seen by the suggestion of a common currency and a move to majority voting. Caroline Jackson argues that it shows the different direction in which the party could have developed regarding engagement with the Community, had they not become Eurosceptic.<sup>249</sup> It also highlights the importance of the issue of reforming the decision-making process and the CAP. Although its main proposals on the CAP were not immediately adopted, the document was prescient. The report also reflects similarities between Heath and the MEP delegation in their outlook towards the Community. These similarities had allowed Heath and the delegation to work effectively together. Yet 1974 was a year dictated by external events illustrating the Community’s weakness. Whilst in Britain two general elections in 1974 also created political uncertainty. Kirk remained an influential figure for the British and European Conservatives and maintained his goal of making the European Parliament more powerful. The wider Conservative Party shared this goal and achieved some success as the budgetary powers were extensively discussed. Although this was made difficult due to the fluctuating membership of British Conservative MEPs in the 1970s which also impacted the relatively small grouping of the European Conservatives.<sup>250</sup> Additionally, the Community would have to overcome chronic economic difficulties, eventually through deeper integration. Further integration was a traditional response by the Community to problems that is still used today, which supports the work of historian Harold James, who specifically develops the argument on how the

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<sup>247</sup> The European Integration Archive, Parliament in session European Parliament, 17 August 1974.

<sup>248</sup> UOP, The European Integration Archive, Parliament in session European Parliament, 14 May 1975.

<sup>249</sup> C. Jackson, ‘The First British MEPs’.

<sup>250</sup> See Annex.

Community responded to crisis through deeper integration.<sup>251</sup> Yet Harold James does not specifically explore the European Parliament in his account.

The most significant contribution made by the British Conservative MEPs occurred in 1976 when a censure motion to dismiss the Commission was placed. The matter originated from a powdered milk surplus which had been steadily increasing within the member states and which the Commission had not resolved. Yet by June it was clear that the motion would not advance as both the CDs and the Socialists had opted to vote against the European Conservatives.<sup>252</sup> Despite this Kirk opted to go ahead with the censure in June. He stated that the Commission was 'guilty of flagrant maladministration.'<sup>253</sup> It marked the first time ever the European Parliament had voted on the possibility of wielding its greatest power. However, the motion was defeated with 109 opposing, four abstaining, and only eighteen in favour.<sup>254</sup> The vote clearly indicated that the European Parliament did not hold the Commission accountable. Many members instead pointed to the Council and its failure to act earlier.<sup>255</sup> Although the censure had little impact on the matter, it was the first time the European Parliament had expressly considered using this power, and it was led by the British Conservative MEPs. Corbett, Jacobs, and Shackleton argue that after this censure motion was placed, other groupings felt they could use this power if required.<sup>256</sup>

Fisheries remained a concern from 1973 onwards. The first time the MEPs attempted to have an input on fisheries was in 1976 when the Conservative Scott-Hopkins took a lead on the matter. In 1975 he suggested the European Commission examine the fisheries industry. By the end of 1975, the European Commission then provided £9.5 million to assist with these

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<sup>251</sup> H. James, *Europe Reborn: A History 1914-2000* (Harlow: Longman, 2003), p.268.

<sup>252</sup> UOP, The European Integration Archive, Parliament in session European Parliament, 9 June 1976.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> CCA, CATH 243, Censure decision, 28 June 1976.

<sup>255</sup> Milk surplus was a difficult situation to resolve as the only solution was for member states to suggest farmers reduce their herd numbers. The Conservatives felt the matter had been on-going since British accession and thus felt compelled to place a censure motion against the Commission.

<sup>256</sup> R. Corbett, F. Jacobs, M. Shackleton, p.240.

difficulties. Scott-Hopkins remained unhappy, suggesting the sum was not enough to remedy the chronic issues of the fisheries industry.<sup>257</sup> Regardless, this demonstrates that MEPs such as Scott-Hopkins could effectively work with the Commission. Yet the OPEC oil crisis had greatly affected the cost of fishing through its impact on the price of fuel. Scott-Hopkins was supported by the Danish members of the grouping as Denmark suffered greatly from the downturn in the fishing industry. Wilfred Ewing and Labour MP Mark Hughes also supported Scott-Hopkins.<sup>258</sup> They wanted the Commission to support a quota on fishing and to extend the exclusivity of British coasts.

However, Pierre Lardinois, the Dutch Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Developments, argued against this as he believed Scott-Hopkins was being too negative about the prospects for fisheries, stating that the industry had begun to recover from 1975.<sup>259</sup> Yet he agreed that the Community would have to do more regarding fisheries in the future as it was going to be a large concern for member states. The matter was discussed later in the year at a European Council meeting held on 1 April 1976 in Luxembourg. James Callaghan, who had been the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs under Wilson and became PM in 1976, had stressed the importance on fisheries and later stated in a UK Cabinet Committee that discussions had been informal though helpful.<sup>260</sup> Fisheries, the CAP, the budget, and the site of the European Parliament would be constant problems throughout this period until the 1990s, and Conservative MEPs attempted to address these concerns. In doing so however, many British Conservative MEPs became alienated in the European Parliament.

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<sup>257</sup> British Library Newspaper Archive, *The Times*, 'Improved EEC import price system for fish promised', 16 January 1979.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> UOP, The European Integration Archive, Parliament in session European Parliament, 18 June 1976.

<sup>260</sup> TNA, CAB 128/59, Cabinet Committee on Luxembourg Council meeting, 13 April 1976.

As already seen, another aspect of the actions taken by the MEPs regarded their relationship with the CDs. Interactions between the European Conservatives and the CDs had been lukewarm since British accession. Opposition naturally arose because the European Conservatives attempted to be an alternative to the CDs. Kirk had also opposed the Bertrand Report, a document issued by the CD outlining how they felt the Community should develop. However, Thatcher, who would become leader of the Conservative Party in 1975,<sup>261</sup> later viewed the European Parliament as a place where Conservatism could challenge Socialism and, as a result, was keen to cultivate a strong relationship with the CD.<sup>262</sup> However, she did not suggest a merger between the two groupings; rather, she simply wanted closer relations while maintaining organisational separateness. The arrival of the British Labour Party in the European Parliament had also led to this view. The Conservative MEPs felt threatened by the prospect of the combination of the Labour Party delegation with the Socialist grouping.<sup>263</sup> Yet Kirk had appreciated the benefits of being in a separate grouping. There was also a fundamental difference between the CDs and the British Conservatives regarding how they viewed conservatism. Moreover, the British Conservatives had difficulties with Dutch, Italian, and Belgium CDs.<sup>264</sup> Thus, in May 1976 Thatcher proposed a compromise at the CDU (the Conservative Party in Germany) pre-election conference. She stated that ‘we are not aiming at a single monolithic Party, but an alliance of autonomous parties co-operating for a common purpose.’<sup>265</sup> The speech was received well by the CDs members as they, like Thatcher, saw themselves engaged in an ideological fight against Socialism.

Thatcher also envisaged that the European Democratic Union (EDU) should reach beyond the Community. The concept was discussed further in a meeting that took place in May 1976 in

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<sup>261</sup> Thatcher replacing Heath, the referendum and the 1979 general election will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

<sup>262</sup> TNA, PREM 19/1035, Kohl message to MT, 15 January 1982.

<sup>263</sup> More detail on Labour’s arrival to the European Parliament is discussed in the Conservative Party Divisions on Europe chapter,

<sup>264</sup> CCA, GNWR, Baron Gordon-Walker of Leyton, private papers, 1975-76.

<sup>265</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO PR 544/76 Speech to Christian Democratic Union Conference, 18 May 1976.

Nice, where Thatcher stated that ‘I have emphasised the need to build the closest possible friendship between our two’.<sup>266</sup> MEPs from both the European Conservatives and CDs attended. Yet little materialised and no formal statement was issued subsequently. There was a greater sense of urgency later in 1976 on the part of both Thatcher and Kirk regarding the formation of an effective centre-right alliance. Geoffrey Pridham observed that due to the imminent prospect of direct elections, groupings began to work more closely together.<sup>267</sup> This was the case with the European Conservatives and the CDs. Furthermore, it was noted by the British Conservatives that the Socialist parties of Europe had worked together in the Socialist International (which was similar to the CDU but for left-wing parties). It meant they had a framework for co-operation which allowed them to discuss matters and act in a more uniform manner.<sup>268</sup> Hence, unlike the Conservative parties of Europe, the Socialists were able to resolve disagreements they had with one another and establish shared priorities. Conversely, the Conservative parties of Europe had hampered each other, illustrated by the various disagreements that occurred between the European Conservatives and the CD. In July 1976, the CDs also changed their grouping to form the European People’s Party (EPP), and Leo Tindemans, the Belgium Prime Minister, became the first President of the EPP in May. The change in name shows how groupings were becoming more responsive than they had been in previous years, motivated by fears of the expanding numbers of the Socialist grouping in the European Parliament.<sup>269</sup> The second and more influential motive for the increased contemplation of alliances was the imminent prospect of direct elections to the European Parliament. Thatcher reiterated her views through the document produced by the Conservative Party in October 1976, *The Right Approach*, where she suggested that direct

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> G. Pridham and P. Pridham, *Transnational Party Co-operation and European integration: The Process Towards Direct Elections*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 52-84.

<sup>268</sup> CCA, *The Right Approach*, 4 October 1976, p.69.

<sup>269</sup> For a detailed account of why the EPP name change occurred see M. Gehler, G. Bischof, L. Kühnhardt, R. Steininger, (ed), *Towards a European Constitution: A Historical and Political Comparison with the United States*, (Munich, Boehlau Verlag, 2005), pp.320-355.



elections would legitimise the European Parliament, and ensure it had powers to sufficiently carry out this task. Thatcher stated that:

A directly elected European Parliament will provide the front line of democratic control over the Commission and the Council of Ministers, both in combination with the United Kingdom Parliament (where effectiveness in dealing with EEC matters needs to be improved) and in areas where the European Parliament has its own powers, for example over questioning Commissioners and controlling the Commission budget.<sup>270</sup>

The document also suggested that the CAP had to be addressed. Kirk personally held views close to those expressed in this document. He had in 1976 discussed how direct elections would bring ‘democratic legitimacy’ to the Community.<sup>271</sup> He had a cordial relationship with Thatcher, although more detached from the Heath government – as probably were the majority of Conservative MEPs than compared to Heath’s government. Moreover, Thatcher was able to hold strong working relations with other pro-European Conservative members such as John Davies (MP of Knutsford and not a MEP).<sup>272</sup> Davies had been the Director-General of the CBI from 1965 to 1969 and worked with Heath during the accession negotiations. From 1974 he worked as the chairman of the select committee on European secondary legislation (the scrutiny committee). Thatcher appointed Davies as Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in November 1976. Furthermore, when Britain had the opportunity to send two Commissioners to the EC, Thatcher suggested both Davies and Kirk (she recommended Davies ahead of Kirk due to fears over Kirk’s health, Kirk had a heart attack in 1975 and a second in 1977) as potential choices, the other

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<sup>270</sup> CCA, The Right Approach, 4 October 1976, p.12.

<sup>271</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/1/3 European Conservative Group Correspondence between Peter Kirk and Acting Chairman (1/3), 18 April 1976.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

being occupied by Christopher Soames.<sup>273</sup> Richard Corbett has argued that Thatcher was traditionally sceptical of MEPs as a whole.<sup>274</sup> Although as seen from the above, Thatcher did regularly worked with pro-Europeans in her early years as party leader, and supported the strengthening of the European Parliament.

In 1977 Thatcher maintained her support for closer relations between the European Conservatives and the CDs. Alliances and direct elections for Thatcher were interlinked as they both affected the balance between Socialism and Conservatism in the European Parliament. Thatcher assumed that an alliance between the majority of French Conservatives, alongside the European Conservatives and the EPP, would overcome the expanding Socialist grouping.<sup>275</sup> This would also mean that the Conservative alliance would not need the support of the various European Liberals. It again emphasises Thatcher's views of the European Parliament, which was an institution in which Socialism had to be overcome. Her views were shown in a speech to the Conservative Group on Europe, Thatcher stated:

At the same time, as you know, we are busy making new contacts and friendships with like-minded parties across the Channel. It is essential that we should achieve an efficient working co-operation between these like-minded parties before, during and after the first round of direct elections. The political arithmetic of Europe shows why this is so. In the present European Parliament for example the Socialists are the largest single group. They outnumber the Christian Democrats, the next largest group, by 66 seats to 51. But if there is an effective alliance between the Christian Democrats, the Conservatives and the Gaullists and their allies, then our total rises from 51 to 85 — enough to secure a majority against Socialists and Communists combined, even without the support of the Liberals.

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<sup>273</sup> TNA, PREM 16/1035, Europe and Devolution, 23 July 1976.

<sup>274</sup> R. Corbett, pp.213-243.

<sup>275</sup> TNA, PREM 16/1035, CDU, Welches Europa? 1 February 1977.

I know the difficulties which history has created. I know the misunderstandings which have to be cleared up before we can achieve total unity between centre right groups. But, despite these, I feel sure we can and must secure a working co-operation which will enable us to fight the direct elections successfully, and to join together afterwards in the European Parliament to protect those values of freedom and human dignity which we hold in common.<sup>276</sup>

The speech again shows that Thatcher wanted the European Conservatives to work more closely with the EPP. Additionally, she was encouraged by the meetings between Kirk and the new chairman of the EPP Leo Tindemans. Kirk had a stronger relationship with Tindemans than his predecessor Herr Hans-August Lucker.<sup>277</sup> As a direct consequence political campaigning was regularly discussed between the two groupings. The EPP and European Conservatives also occasionally spoke jointly at seminars held for various media outlets to develop an understanding of how the EP functioned, thereby presenting themselves publicly as associates. Furthermore, there was regular contact between senior Conservative figures across Europe. Helmut Kohl, the West German Chancellor, had meetings with Thatcher and both spoke at CDU events regarding the economic problems Europe faced and how best to overcome them.<sup>278</sup> Moreover, Conservative youth movements and women's groups made substantial efforts to promote cross-European collaboration. They also held many events to encourage discussion about groupings and the EP. The cooperation led to a more systematic approach taken by the British Conservatives and their potential allies across Europe to communicate and work more efficiently. In Tony Jensen's account, he explains that the efforts made by these groups allowed the EPP to limit the amount of work the actual

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<sup>276</sup> CCA, THCR, 2.6.1.108, Speech to the Conservative Group on Europe, 24 November 1976.

<sup>277</sup> CCA, THCR, 2.6.1.109, Papers relating to Europe, 15 August 1977.

<sup>278</sup> Bodleian Archive, CCOPR 544/76, Thatcher's speech to the CDU, 25 May 1976.

grouping had to do in its respective states.<sup>279</sup> Nonetheless, there were important divergences of outlook to be overcome. A key area of tension involved the CAP, to which there was hostility from within the British Conservatives, while EPP members were in favour.

Furthermore, with direct elections looming the European Parliament was under more scrutiny, particularly regarding its cost and how it should develop. The cost was a traditional point of contention which encompassed MEPs salaries, expenses, and the site of the Parliament; while on a more political level most feared the federalist threat the European Parliament carried. Since Britain had begun to send MEPs to Strasbourg, newspapers and anti-EEC MPs from both the Labour and Conservative parties often complained about the scope and influence of the European Parliament. In an interview with *The Times*, Conservative Neil Marten (MP for Banbury) stated that ‘the real intention behind the introduction of direct elections to the European Parliament was the creation of a federal or unitary state.’<sup>280</sup> The EP had three areas of work and the inability to decide where the European Parliament should sit damaged its credibility.<sup>281</sup> Some had wanted the official site moved to Brussels; others felt there was no need to change the sites as they stood in 1977. Moreover, politicians in Brussels were attempting to build a hemicycle and host plenary sessions also, due to the financial incentives of housing the European Parliament.<sup>282</sup> Thus Giscard d’Estaing (President of France) and Thorn (Prime Minister of Luxembourg) brought the matter to the European Council meeting that was held in London 29-30 July 1977. Both the British Conservative and Labour parties had hoped not to become involved in the subject. However, by 1977 the Conservative government felt it was too costly and time consuming for

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<sup>279</sup> T. Jansen, *The European People's Party: Origins and Development* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p.73.

<sup>280</sup> British Library Newspaper Archive, *The Times*, ‘Direct Elections would lead to a federal state’, 7 February 1976.

<sup>281</sup> See introduction for more on the site of the European Parliament.

<sup>282</sup> TNA, PREM 16/1264, European Parliament sites, 8 June 1977.

MEPs to commute regularly to Luxembourg and Strasbourg.<sup>283</sup> Furthermore, since 1973 MEPs on several occasions had struggled to return to the House of Commons in time for important votes. There was thus support for the idea of the site being moved to Brussels which was closer to London. Advocates of this change included Callaghan and the Conservative MEP delegation.<sup>284</sup> Additionally, the European Parliament required better facilities to improve the efficiency of committee work which was conducted in Brussels. The Treaty of Rome, however, stated that if the site of a European institution was to be moved, it required a unanimous decision by all member states.<sup>285</sup> Thatcher had also suggested it was important for Britain not to completely side with France and Italy, both of whom supported moving the location of the institution.<sup>286</sup> She felt the matter could be used as a bargaining chip for future negotiations within the Community, demonstrating that the European Parliament was only one aspect of a much larger European policy under Thatcher. But as the European Parliament was a Community institution it still required the Conservative Party's resources and efforts. The complexities around the site of the European Parliament and the inability to resolve the matter damaged the European Parliament's credibility.

Linked to the notion of the cost of the European Parliament, the subject of MEPs expenses began to surface. MEP expenses were often raised in the House of Commons.<sup>287</sup> With much discussion of direct elections, anti-EEC members of the Commons attacked the ineffectiveness of the European Parliament. The criticism came from both Labour and Conservative MPs. When the problems of a dual mandate was discussed, the Conservative MP for Plymouth Sutton Alan Clark responded, 'You can do anything on £40,000 a year'.<sup>288</sup>

Callaghan thus decided that the issue of both the site of the European Parliament and the

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<sup>283</sup> Ibid, European Council Meeting Steering Committee, 11 July 1977.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> European Parliament Archive, Treaty of Rome, Article 216, 25 March 1957, p.74.

<sup>285</sup> CCA, THCR 2.11.12.1 European Conservatives Group Memorandum, 13 June 1978.

<sup>286</sup> Most member states by 1977 were in favour of moving the European Parliament.

<sup>287</sup> See *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 934 cc1436-56907, 4 July 1977.

<sup>288</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 952 cc1390-128, 9 June 1978.

salaries of the MEPs had to be resolved.<sup>289</sup> It also demonstrates another early effect of direct elections: namely, that the European Parliament received more scrutiny. Those opposing the EEC would continue to attack the European Parliament as it had not gained any substantial powers yet remained costly which again damaged its credibility and created tensions between MEPs and MPs.

The sudden death of Peter Kirk in April 1977 greatly affected the Conservative MEPs. James Scott-Hopkins, the agricultural spokesmen, stood in as the temporary leader of the Conservative delegation.<sup>290</sup> One month later, Thatcher expressed interest in Geoffrey Rippon becoming the grouping's chairman. Rippon was a leading member of Heath's delegation that had negotiated entry into the Community. However, the MEPs felt that the chairman should be nominated and selected by them.<sup>291</sup> Nevertheless, Rippon stood unchallenged and became leader of the Conservative delegation in June, although he stepped down soon after due to his lack of enthusiasm at the prospect of campaigning in European elections for his seat.<sup>292</sup> He was replaced by Scott-Hopkins towards the end of 1977,<sup>293</sup> who would play a larger role in the European Conservatives. He was less enthusiastic than Kirk about the European Parliament, an attitude that had a significant impact on Conservative thought regarding the European Parliament. The death of Kirk and the leadership of Scott-Hopkins played a critical role in the British Conservative approach to the European Parliament and changed the internal dynamics of the delegation.

As in the previous year, the matter of the cost of the European Parliament continued to manifest itself. In 1978, with European Elections due, matters more specific to the cost of a

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<sup>289</sup> In this thesis the term 'cost' will encompass two areas of concern, the site of the European Parliament and the salary of the MEPs.

<sup>290</sup> CGA, T. J. Bainbridge, Memorandum on the Conservative Group leadership, 8 May 1978.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid. Scott-Hopkins MEP leadership, 5 October 1977.

MEP surfaced.<sup>294</sup> Once more, MPs voiced their opinions. David Stoddart (Labour MP for Swindon) stated that ‘We are told that an Assemblyman will receive between £25,000 and £30,000 per annum, plus expenses. That compares with only £6,270 for Members of this House.’<sup>295</sup> The statement shows the particular focus on expenses and salary requirements that had long been a concern but which was becoming more prominent in British political debates. The European Election Information Programme (EEIP) was created because of these comments as it intended to explain the role of MEPs to the British public. Conservative MEPs strongly felt the need for public awareness on this issue. Originally, the British Labour government had proposed in 1978 that MEPs should receive 40 per cent of the salary of a British Commissioner.<sup>296</sup> However, this method would mean that the salary of a MEP would be double that of a UK MP. The proposal was met with opposition particularly from Labour MPs (as seen above in David Stoddart's comments). MEPs, however, argued that even to receive double the salary of UK MPs was still insufficient, as it would entail British MEPs receiving significantly less than their European counterparts (see table below).<sup>297</sup> Many British MEPs, including Conservatives, suggested that the salary remain the same, but that MEPs be heavily subsidised by expenses. Conservative MEPs argued that the cost of their work, when expenses such as travel were considered, was more than that of an MP. Salaries were a very sensitive subject for Westminster MPs too, who felt that MEPs were undermining their status.<sup>298</sup> Corbett and Shackleton in their account suggest that the salary of a MEP created long-term tensions between British MEPs and MPs.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Eventually held on 7 June 1979.

<sup>295</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 944 cc683-76116, 21 February 1978.

<sup>296</sup> TNA, FCO 30/3810, Direct Election Salaries 18 October 1979.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid*, Proposed Salaries, Sept. 1978. For a more detailed account on the European Parliament, salaries and expenses (from a non-British MEP perspective) see W. T. Daniel, *Career Behaviour and the European Parliament: All Roads Lead Through Brussels?*, (Oxford: University of Oxford Press), pp.35-56.

<sup>299</sup> Corbett and Shackleton, pp.61-70.

Country	Proposed Salary of MEPs	Salary of National Parliamentarians
Denmark	£22,128	£11,750
Luxembourg	£21,480	£4,500
Belgium	£21,480	£21,500
Netherlands	£21,000	£19,530
Germany	£20,976	£22,700
France	£19,224	£21,000
Italy	£14,232	£10,500
United Kingdom	£12,966	£6,837
Ireland	£12,756	£6,273

Table 1. Proposed Salaries of MEPs<sup>300</sup>

Winifred Ewing, the Scottish Nationalist MEP in 1978, argued that the rates being proposed ‘would make us the laughingstock of Europe’.<sup>301</sup> Lord Bethell (Conservative MEP for London Northwest) agreed and suggested that the cost of an overseas office and staffing were particular points that should be taken into consideration when discussing MEP salaries. The matter was brought to the European Parliament which struggled to further subsidise the salaries of all MEPs. It suggested that MEPs’ salaries be adjusted by application of the corrective coefficient system for purchasing powers in different member states as laid down for employees of the Commission.<sup>302</sup> It also reiterated that the European Parliament had the right to determine certain indemnities and to fix expenses. These proposals were considered by the British government and were widely supported by the Conservative opposition. Thatcher had supported an increase to £21,000.<sup>303</sup> The matter of MEPs’ salaries was an episode where Conservative MPs and MEPs worked together. However, there were some Conservative MPs who did oppose the wage increase.<sup>304</sup> Due to this opposition the relationship between Conservative MPs and MEPs was strained, particularly because salaries

<sup>300</sup> TNA, FCO 30/3810, Proposed Salaries, 17 September 1978.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid, Winifred Ewing Complaint, 2 October 1978.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid, Commission response, 5 December 1978.

<sup>303</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO/508/5/10, Baden-Baden, Study day note, 3 March 1978.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid, MPs included Fergus Montgomery, Neil Merten, and Ian Grist.



were a very sensitive matter. Internal disputes were evident despite Thatcher's support for the MEPs over the issue.

Yet by 1979 Conservatives MEPs understood the workings of the European Parliament. They understood the indirect influence they could have through their relationship with Commissioners. This is a significant point, as it impacted how decisions were made in the Community, which was very different to national Parliaments. As described in Johannes Lindner's work, MEPs played a significant role in the formulation of the Community budget due to their role in approving the annual budget. Delaying the budget had great implications for the wider Community.<sup>305</sup> Furthermore, MEPs could work within their own grouping, and align with others, in the European Parliament. MEPs were also important during this period when it came to domestic campaigning, another area in which the Labour Party lacked experience. However, in the 1975 referendum the Conservatives used MEPs to speak at events and work on the Yes campaign.<sup>306</sup> Thus overall, the Conservatives had a better understanding of the utility of a MEP and as a result were more receptive to meeting the costs of the post. It also demonstrates that the MEPs were pro-European since accession, maintaining a Heathite presence from 1973 to 1992.

Despite his different views to Kirk, Scott-Hopkins also wanted to develop the European Parliament's influence in the decision-making process. Additionally, Kirk had had ambivalent views towards prominent figures within the EPP grouping which strained relations.<sup>307</sup> The decision for the British Conservative MEPs to sit independently in 1973 also contributed to the lukewarm relationship with the EPP. However, Scott-Hopkins had stronger relationships with the EPP members, even with chairman Leo Tindemans. Scott-Hopkins proposed that a European Foundation should be formed to assist any existing bodies that

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<sup>305</sup> J. Lindner, *Conflict and Change in EU Budgetary Politics*, (London: Routledge, 2006), pp.21-46.

<sup>306</sup> The referendum will be discussed in more detail in section two.

<sup>307</sup> Until 1979, formally Christian Democrats.

promoted the values of the Community, such as youth organisations, university exchanges, seminars etc. He believed this would promote a positive image of the Community and the European Parliament in particular, which was supported by Tindemans.<sup>308</sup> Human contact across Europe was a matter that was implicit in the Treaty of Rome.<sup>309</sup> The change of MEP leadership clearly placed the European Conservatives closer to the EPP, yet Scott-Hopkins had a different style of leadership to Kirk which would affect the grouping's dynamics in the early 1980s. Some MEPs felt Scott-Hopkins in comparison to Kirk was less proactive and took a more formal approach to working with MEPs in the grouping.<sup>310</sup>

The final change in 1979 was that the European Conservatives officially changed their name to the European Democratic Group (EDG). The EDG was picked because it was closely linked to the EDU, showing a connection to Conservatism both inside and outside the Community.<sup>311</sup> Furthermore, the name change would align the EDG closer to the EPP: European Elections research showed that the public felt that the European Conservatives were not making the necessary effort required to work with the other centre-right groupings of the European Parliament.<sup>312</sup> This was part of the wider Conservative policy to work more closely with the European Community, a policy endorsed by Thatcher as well as Scott-Hopkins. Thatcher initially did not have a strong working relationship with Scott-Hopkins.<sup>313</sup> After the 1979 European Election she had wanted the Conservative Paul Channon, who had been MP for Southend West since 1959, to take over the leadership. However, he failed to be selected in his Essex seat, which was taken by the Conservative David Curry.<sup>314</sup> Due to this, Thatcher was left without a potential leader. Scott-Hopkins had been temporarily leader previously and he was willing to give up some of his time in Westminster to once more lead

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<sup>308</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 9 March 1978.

<sup>309</sup> European Parliament Archive, Treaty of Rome article 216, 25 March 1957, p.43.

<sup>310</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>311</sup> CCA, THCR 2.11.12.1 European Conservatives Group Memorandum, 13 June 1978.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> Author interview with Michael Welsh, 11 November 2016.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

the grouping in the European Parliament.<sup>315</sup> As will be seen, however, Scott-Hopkins did eventually develop a strong relationship with Thatcher.

Overall it can be seen that Conservative MEPs were proactive in the European Parliament since British accession. They also had some successes such as implementing a new form of question time in the European Parliament. The chapter in this regard agrees with the work of Caroline Jackson who also suggests that British MEPs were keen to make an impact in the European Parliament.<sup>316</sup> This thesis differs from her earlier work as it firstly extends the period examined, but also shows in greater detail the complexities around the formation of the European Conservatives due to greater archival material being available.<sup>317</sup> It also differs from Zig Layton-Henry's conclusions which suggest that British MEPs were unable to join the CD due to opposition from Italian and Belgian members of the CDs.<sup>318</sup> Instead, the chapter has shown that financial incentives as well as the need to make a distinct contribution in the European Parliament were both important in the decision to eventually create an independent grouping and that the Conservatives had even considered sitting independently prior to accession. However, Conservative MEPs were scrutinised by British Parliamentarians, as some felt that the European Parliament was a costly federal institution. In their account, Corbett and Shackleton suggest that the salary of the MEPs created long-term tensions with MPs.<sup>319</sup> Yet this chapter shows that the MEPs' salary increase was supported by Thatcher. Hence Heath and Thatcher both supported the MEPs. Heath had strong relations with the MEPs as he selected the delegation. Communication between MEPs and MPs throughout was clearer than it would be after direct elections. This was a positive effect of the dual mandate as, despite MEPs being overworked, they had regular contact with

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<sup>315</sup> Scott-Hopkins leadership and direct elections will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

<sup>316</sup> C. Jackson, 'The First British MEPs'.

<sup>317</sup> The contribution made in this chapter regarding grouping formation was made possible as there was more accessible archival material than Jackson's account which was written in 1993. In this regard the Bodleian Library and the National Archives were crucial.

<sup>318</sup> Z. Leyton-Henry, *Conservative Politics in Western Europe*, (London: Palgrave, 1982), p.340.

<sup>319</sup> R. Corbett and M. Shackleton, pp.61-70.

Westminster, and as a result some had strong relations with the Conservative MPs. Yet the chapter also demonstrates that important decisions regarding the European Parliament were led by either the government or the Conservative Party as seen with the site of the European Parliament, and salaries of the MEPs. However, the MEPs were also able to act independently as they were a multinational grouping consisting of Danish members, as seen in the memorandum tabled in 1973 and the introduction of a new question time which was led by the MEPs under Kirk.

## Chapter Two: Introduction of Direct Elections

The chapter will examine one of the most important developments in the European Parliament, that of direct elections. Matters ranging from seat distribution to promoting direct elections caused constant delays and damaged the European Parliament's credibility. The chapter will also show that despite direct elections being central to the MEPs, elections occurred due to the work of other Community institutions and member-state governments. Moreover, many MEPs felt that the powers of the European Parliament would increase after elections occurred, which did not immediately happen. Direct elections also demonstrate the negative views of some MPs towards the European Parliament which contributed to some MEPs becoming more reluctant to work with MPs and instead spent more time working in European Parliament committees. Yet due to low turnout and lack of media coverage, elections remained a sensitive topic for MEPs throughout the period this thesis covers; low turnout also highlights that the European Parliament struggled to find a perceived visibility in British politics. The chapter will show in detail the contributions made by the Conservative Party, as they advocated direct elections. The party's contributions will be seen through different plans for MEP constituencies or suggestions put forward regarding the distribution of seats for the member states.

The idea of direct elections was a source of controversy throughout the 1970s.<sup>320</sup> Jeremy Thorpe, the British Liberal Party leader (1967-76), was strongly in favour. Peter Kirk had not openly opposed the idea of direct elections but wanted to 'let sleeping dogs lie' in 1974.<sup>321</sup> He felt that the biggest objective for the Conservative delegation was to increase and define the powers of the European Parliament. Kirk also believed that having a high turnout for the

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<sup>320</sup> For a detailed account on the differing views of European nations on direct elections in the European Parliament see, B. Steunenberg, J. Thomassen, ed., *The European Parliament: Moving Toward Democracy in the EU*, (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002), chapter two.

<sup>321</sup> BA 22/696, Peter Kirk's first six months experience as a MEP, 10 June 1973.

first direct elections was vital, because a low turnout would be seen as a vote of no confidence in the European Parliament and the Community.<sup>322</sup> Moreover, as Michael Steed suggests there had been some opposition towards European Parliament fearing the federalist nature of the institution.<sup>323</sup> Steed also stated in 1971 that MEPs were presumed ‘to be inferior calibre to fellow parliamentarians,’ despite them having the burden of a dual mandate.<sup>324</sup> Direct elections also went against the agenda of the Labour Party, who continued to be absent from the European Parliament. In contrast, they wanted to ‘strengthen the Council’.<sup>325</sup> Hence they feared a high turnout for direct elections would provide the European Parliament with an opportunity to demand more powers. Turnout thus began to be a significant matter.

The Labour government also had to decide on sending representatives to the European Parliament as it had reached its self-imposed six-month deadline for determining the matter. The Conservative delegation thought that Labour would take its seats after renegotiation in 1975, posing a potential problem as it ‘would swell up the numbers of the Socialist Group’ and make it the largest grouping in the European Parliament.<sup>326</sup> The Conservative delegation had enjoyed the freedom and financial incentives independence brought. They had also made progress in distancing themselves from the CDs as they did not want to be seen merely as a grouping the CDs could rely on for votes.<sup>327</sup> Moreover, on certain votes (as mentioned previously on mergers) the Gaullists supported the European Conservatives.<sup>328</sup> However, the European Conservatives did not want to align themselves too closely with the Gaullists due to

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<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid. Also as seen through the comments made by MPs such as Neil Marten

<sup>324</sup> M. Steed, ‘The European Parliament: Significance of Direct Election’, *Government and Opposition*, 6.1 (1971) 62-76.

<sup>325</sup> FCO 30/2569, Report on all issues with Direct Elections, 13 January 1975.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> CCA, THCR, 2.11.9.21, CRD opinion survey of MEPs, 5 December 1975.

<sup>328</sup> See MEPs in the European Parliament chapter.

the credibility of some of their members.<sup>329</sup> The objective until 1992 was to be an alternative centre-right grouping to the CDs (later the EPP).

Yet fear of the Socialists enlarging their representation in the European Parliament led to a re-evaluation by the Conservative delegation. The European Conservatives shared a similar view to the CDs, believing that strengthening the powers of the European Parliament was essential in moving the Community in the right direction. Throughout the latter part of 1973 and early 1974 relations between the two groupings strengthened. Eventually, on 11 December 1974 Lord Bessborough announced his wish for the two groupings to merge.<sup>330</sup> The announcement occurred a day after the Paris Conference at which a date for direct elections was proposed. The timing demonstrates the concerns over direct elections, and how it could alter representation within the European Parliament.

The Labour Party was certain that a decision on direct elections would be taken by the Council in 1976, and that elections would be held in 1978.<sup>331</sup> Labour feared that nothing stopped other member states from moving forward without Britain in the following years. Additionally, it was becoming clear that the Conservative delegation had a large workload. Most sat on two or more committees which meant they spent almost 100 days away from Westminster annually.<sup>332</sup> The workload worried both the Conservative and Labour Party as MEPs caused whipping problems since they were not always present at Westminster Parliament.

Furthermore, it was clear that the Conservative delegation had to return regularly to London for Westminster business, which limited the amount they could achieve in Strasbourg, again showing the problem of the dual mandate. Due to these problems, steps were taken in 1974 to

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<sup>329</sup> CCA, THCR, 2.11.9.21, CRD opinion survey of MEPs, 5 December 1975.

<sup>330</sup> FCO 30/2569, Report on all issues with Direct elections, 15 January 1975.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

address direct elections on both a legislative and political level. First, there were plans over the procedure for voting in direct elections. The independent MEP Lord O'Hagan proposed a plan in May which suggested that all 36 seats should be elected at a UK general election for electoral districts formed by groupings of existing UK parliamentary constituencies.<sup>333</sup> The Conservative Lord Beamish also put a plan forward. He proposed that at a general election, certain candidates would be designated as candidates to the European Parliament.<sup>334</sup> After the election, each parliamentary party would select their own MEPs. To counter the dual mandate problem Beamish proposed that each MEP have a 'running mate' who would deal with constituency matters in the MEP's absence. The 'running mate' would also be able to vote on behalf of the MEP in Westminster.<sup>335</sup> Both these plans were unofficially supported by Heath and Kirk, though Kirk still wanted to delay direct elections.<sup>336</sup> The two proposed plans also demonstrate the sheer number of issues that direct elections had to address as well as the issue around a dual mandate.

The prospect of direct elections raised numerous legal issues. A select committee of MEPs attempted to resolve some of them. The committee's findings in 1974 argued that direct elections could be linked to the extension of powers for the European Parliament.<sup>337</sup> It suggested granting comprehensive budgetary powers, introducing a legislative right which would be supervised by a second chamber, and to play a role in the initiation of policymaking in the Community.<sup>338</sup> Kirk was a supporter of this report, as it proposed more powers for the EP, which was his fundamental goal.<sup>339</sup> Claes Holger Vreese in his work similarly discusses the connection between direct elections and the powers of the European Parliament. He

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<sup>333</sup> Ibid, O'Hagan Plan. Lord O'Hagan was a crossbencher in the House of Lords and was an independent representative to the European Parliament.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid, The Beamish Plan.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> FCO 30/2076 European Parliament report: Legal Implications of Direct Elections, 21 March 1974.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid.



argues that despite the failures of direct elections, they allowed the European Parliament to gain powers in subsequent treaty ratifications like the Single European Act.<sup>340</sup> A decision on direct elections was eventually made late in December at the Summit Conference in Paris which stated that direct elections should take place in or after 1978. This again illustrates the complexities of direct elections as it was a large task, requiring all member states to ratify in their respective national parliaments. Moreover, opposition persisted in many member states as direct elections were seen as an attempt by the European Parliament to undermine national parliaments, as many correctly assumed the European Parliament would seek more influence if elections occurred which many member states thought would lead to an erosion of national sovereignty.

Within the EP, by 1975 groupings began to prepare their campaigns for direct elections. The Socialist Grouping had even made a working group to compare member parties' national views. Juliet Lodge has argued that the Socialists wanted a draft programme that would have a 'short ideological preamble and set out a few points for action'.<sup>341</sup> As direct elections were the first that would occur for a cross-national political institution, such programmes had to be broad in order to maintain consistency. The British Labour Party would eventually send observers to a working group of the Socialists to see whether it could join the Socialist grouping.<sup>342</sup> Kirk felt that Labour would inevitably join the Socialist group, making it the largest grouping with 67 members, eclipsing the 51 seats held by the CDs and the twenty seats of the European Conservatives.<sup>343</sup> The fear of the potential size of the Socialist Grouping had led to Kirk, however, wanting to work more closely with the CDs in the run-up to direct elections.

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<sup>340</sup> W. van der Brug, and C. de Vreese, eds, *(Un)intended Consequences of EU Parliamentary Elections*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.5.

<sup>341</sup> J. Lodge and V. Herman, p.138.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

<sup>343</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Economist*, 'Referendum Brief', 5 April 1975. For more on the Socialist grouping in the European Parliament see K. Hudson, *The New European Left: A Socialism for the Twenty-First Century?* (London: Palgrave, 2012).

The CDs and the European Conservatives were still in disagreement regarding the Patijin and Bertrand reports, issued respectively by the Socialist Grouping and the EPP outlining their vision for the Community's future.<sup>344</sup> Moreover, similarly to the Labour Party they too were worried about the direction and speed in which the Community was moving. However, unlike the Labour delegation, the Conservatives under Kirk still wanted to develop the role of the European Parliament in order to make the Council of Ministers and the Commission more accountable for their actions.<sup>345</sup> The one aspect the European Conservatives and the CDs agreed upon was the European Parliament having larger budgetary powers. They both envisaged that the Community's decision making should occur through a representation of a Chamber of States. The relationship between the CDs and the European Conservatives ebbed and flowed in 1975 due to the two large reports, (the Bertrand and Patijin reports).<sup>346</sup> There was also a mutual distrust between Kirk and Herr Hans-August Luckner, the CDs leader, which worsened the situation.<sup>347</sup> The distrust stemmed from the decision taken by the British Conservative MEPs to form their own grouping. Yet both groupings saw the threat of a large Socialist grouping which ensured the CDs and European Conservatives worked closer together. In his account, Simon Hix concludes that the size and diversity of groupings became a concern after direct elections occurred in 1979.<sup>348</sup> Yet as seen from above, direct elections also spurred the British Conservative MEPs to work with other groupings, namely the CDs.

Despite an agreement being reached that direct elections should occur in 1978 or after, the Conservative Party felt it was highly unlikely. Thatcher and Kirk agreed that there were too many detailed issues that needed to be tackled in time for direct elections.<sup>349</sup> Matters ranged

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<sup>344</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/1/2, Grouping Bureau Meeting, 15 June 1974.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> These reports are discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>347</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/1/2, Grouping Bureau Meeting, 15 June 1974.

<sup>348</sup> S. Hix, A. Noury, and G. Roland, *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.32-54.

<sup>349</sup> CCO 508/1/3, European Conservative Group Correspondence between Peter Kirk and Acting Chairman, 4 January 1976.

from what method should be used for the elections to legislative issues regarding the powers an MEP should hold.<sup>350</sup> Yet it seemed to the European Parliament that Britain was still hostile towards elections. This was again due to comments made by MPs such as John Stokes (Conservative MP for Halesowen and Stourbridge) who said ‘I make no secret of my position. I do not want an Assembly of any kind in Scotland or in any other part of the United Kingdom.’<sup>351</sup> Also, the European Conservatives noted the opposition by their Danish members towards elections being held in 1978. Many were concerned with the federal direction in which the Community could head if the European Parliament became more powerful.<sup>352</sup> Denmark wanted to maintain the dual mandate believing Danish MPs could keep MEPs in line with their government.<sup>353</sup> In 1978 Willy Brandt even proposed that one-third of the European Parliament’s MEPs should have a dual mandate.<sup>354</sup> Similar to Britain, David Wood has suggested that direct elections did not happen in 1978 because of the internal situation in France.<sup>355</sup> France had been the driving force for elections since the mid-1960s. France’s Georges Speanle, who was President of the European Parliament, was keen on direct elections, but the Gaullist wing in France’s national parliament was growing and opposed elections. Similar to Britain, they feared the European Parliament would eventually take powers from national parliaments, this was very different to the West Germany view on federalism which functioned more as a decentralised state, and as Klaus Von Beyme argues

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<sup>350</sup> TNA, FCO 30/2569, Report on all issues with Direct Elections, 19 October 1975.

<sup>351</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb, vol 940 cc509-8730, 14 November 1977.

<sup>352</sup> For a detailed account on direct elections and British views on federalism see, M. Burgess, *Federalism and European Union: Political Ideas, Influences, and Strategies in the European Community 1972-1986*, (London: Routledge 1989) or N.J. Crowson, *The Conservative Party and European Integration since 1945: At the Heart of Europe?* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp.45-47.

<sup>353</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/5, European Parliament: Direct Elections, 22 February 1976.

<sup>354</sup> TNA, FCO 30/2569, Dual Mandate solutions, 22 June 1975. A decision on a dual mandate was not made after this – MEPs were free to choose to hold a dual mandate. Thatcher during the run up to the first direct election encouraged a small number of MEPs to hold a dual mandate, which included: Jim Spicer, Michael Shaw, Jim Scott-Hopkins, and Derek Walker-Smith. (See THCR 2.11.12.1, Gow letter to Jim Spicer: MEPs and MP dual mandate, 17 December 1979). A decision was eventually made in 2004 by the Council stating that MEPs may not be part of the national legislature. This did not come into effect in the UK until after the 2009 European Election.

<sup>355</sup> D. M. Wood and B. Yeşilada, *The Emerging European Union*, (White Plains: Longman, 1996), p.35.

federalism in German history was deep rooted.<sup>356</sup> Yet because of opposition it seemed that elections for the European Parliament would be deferred to a later date. However, by 1975 Kirk felt that direct elections had to occur as the dual mandate was causing difficulties for the current Conservative delegation. He also felt that when direct elections occurred ‘everything else will follow’.<sup>357</sup> MEPs thought that the elections would legitimise the European Parliament as a Community institution and thus were keen for them to occur. Moreover, further delay would damage the credibility of the European Parliament as it would be an ineffective institution that could not deliver large-scale projects.

In the period 1976 to 1979 there were matters to address such as legislation for elections, how the number of seats should be allocated, the number of total seats, and how voting should occur. Throughout 1976 the European Parliament was anxious for the Council to make a decision on direct elections. At the March plenary session Schelto Patijn of the Socialists stated ‘that we cannot take no for an answer’.<sup>358</sup> However, the European Conservatives still argued elections were unlikely to occur in 1978 due to the various related outstanding issues surrounding them.<sup>359</sup> The Socialists demanded a decision on the matter be reached at the next European Council meeting which was meant to be in Luxembourg the following month on 9 April.<sup>360</sup> The Conservative MEPs agreed. The Luxembourg European Council meeting devoted much of its time addressing direct elections and narrowed the date for elections down to May-June 1978.<sup>361</sup> Prime Minister James Callaghan supported these developments and suggested Britain would do everything to ensure British European Elections occurred on time.<sup>362</sup> The meeting illustrates the importance of European Council meetings as these were

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<sup>356</sup> K.V.Beyme, Pluralism and Federalism, *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 5, No. 4, (1984), pp. 381-396.

<sup>357</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Economist*, ‘It’s a start’, 15 January 1975.

<sup>358</sup> UOP, The European Integration Archive, Parliament in session European Parliament, 8 August 1975.

<sup>359</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/6, European Parliament: Direct Elections (4), 19 April 1976.

<sup>360</sup> UOP, The European Integration Archive, Parliament in session European Parliament, 8 August 1975.

<sup>361</sup> UOP, Ibid, European Council Conclusions, 10 September 1976.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

where final decisions were taken even though direct elections affected the European Parliament directly.<sup>363</sup> Moreover, it highlights a moment when the Conservative Party and the Labour Party worked towards a similar goal in ensuring these elections occurred.

The allocation of seats was also contentious and again highlighted the complexities around direct elections. The select committee for direct elections in Britain noted that the French President Giscard d'Estaing had originally wanted to allocate seats in proportion to national population.<sup>364</sup> He then abandon this approach and proposed continuing with the existing number of seats allocated to member states.<sup>365</sup> Callaghan also proposed that Britain form another select committee to further investigate the issues surrounding direct elections.<sup>366</sup> His proposal was well received by other member states, as well as the British Conservative delegation of MEPs. Callaghan's decision was an important moment for Britain as the direct election select committee provided experience to the British Parliament on how to effectively to incorporate committees into Westminster Parliament which eventually introduced in 1979.<sup>367</sup> Furthermore, this was the first time in which Denmark had a major disagreement with Britain. Denmark opposed the British variant of seat distribution. Denmark insisted on having more seats than Ireland despite Britain having developed a proposed seat allocation similar to that of France.<sup>368</sup> Denmark was unsupportive of the plan as under these proposals Denmark and Ireland would have fourteen seats each. Hostility had not arisen from the Danish government but from the Veastre Party, which the minority Danish government relied heavily upon for support. The British Conservative Party felt that this was a step backwards

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<sup>363</sup> For a detailed account of the development of the European Council see, W. Wessels, *The European Council*, (London: Palgrave, 2016).

<sup>364</sup> TNA, HO 328/337, Select Committee on Direct Elections, 7 April 1976.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid. This select committee would differ to the Direct Election select committee, as its remit was specifically on implementing the direct elections.

<sup>367</sup> See M. Jogerst, *Reform in the House of Commons: The Select Committee System*, (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1993), pp.58-86.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

for Denmark.<sup>369</sup> The Conservatives suggested that Denmark would try to negotiate for a graded reduction for the smaller nations (Luxembourg, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Belgium). It was decided that the matter of seat allocation would be resolved at the next European Council meeting held on 12 July, as Callaghan, like the Conservative Party, did not want to lose momentum for direct elections. The matter regarding seat distribution is an example of how internal opposition arose within a grouping as MEPs fought for their nation's interests, and not always the grouping's interest, as seen with Denmark. This was the first time in which Danish MEPs had a disagreement with the British Conservative MEPs demonstrating the two usually worked well together.

At the European Council meeting on 12 July 1976, Giscard d'Estaing put forward the idea that seats would be allocated as followed: Luxembourg six, Ireland fifteen, Denmark sixteen, Belgium 24, Netherlands 25, with 81 seats each for the big four, with a total of 410 seats.<sup>370</sup> The French variant meant Belgium lost one seat to Denmark. Belgian President Leo Tindemans agreed to allow the matter to conclude. Callaghan was pleased with the European Council meeting and even pointed to the helpfulness shown by President Giscard d'Estaing and Herr Schmidt.<sup>371</sup> The Conservatives also welcomed the outcome as Britain had gained more seats in the European Parliament, which would cause fewer problems in assigning seats to constituencies.<sup>372</sup> Direct elections had also played a role in the relationships of groupings, particularly between the European Conservatives and CDs, and 1976 remained a year dominated by direct elections. The summit also showed the effectiveness of the European Council on reaching agreements on complex problems for the European Parliament, which was an important moment in the relationship between the various Community institutions. It also acted as a catalyst for the European Conservatives to move closer towards the CDs. It

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<sup>369</sup> TNA, PREM 16/850, EC: FCO additional brief on direct elections, 3 May 1976.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid, Brussels European Council, 12 July 1976.

<sup>371</sup> TNA, CAB 128/59. EC Cabinet Callaghan report on Brussels European Council, 15 July 1976.

<sup>372</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/6, European Parliament: Direct Elections (4), 8 July 1976.

was a move that was encouraged by Thatcher as she had consistently advocated stronger links to the CDs. Yet the matter of seat allocation was resolved by member states and not the European Parliament, which again shows that in 1976 major decisions regarding the European Parliament were taken by other Community institutions and member states.

The timing of direct elections was another pressing concern. It had arisen when Denmark suggested in the previous year at the European Council meeting that it might not be ready for direct elections in time. Many Conservative MEPs, such as Hugh Dykes, demanded the Council did not delay the matter any further stating, 'it was fair and reasonable for elections to occur in 1978.'<sup>373</sup> The Council also proposed that if one nation could not agree to hold direct elections the following year the member state would be able to nominate MEPs itself. The proposal worried MEPs as an election not taking place uniformly across Europe would damage the legitimacy of the European Parliament and its ability to deliver on large-scale projects. Furthermore, the European Conservatives were still anxious about seat distribution. Scott-Hopkins had stated that a decision had to be made swiftly or elections would be subjected to 'further lengthy delays'.<sup>374</sup> At the March plenary session, Kirk urged the Council again to take a final decision on direct elections at the following European Council meeting which was scheduled to be held on 1 April 1977.<sup>375</sup> All the groupings in the European Parliament grew frustrated by the lack of progress in the Council. Kirk supported the proposal that direct elections be held by 1978 as he believed this would democratise the Community and legitimise the European Parliament.<sup>376</sup> Again this shows the sheer number of issues surrounding direct elections. Moreover, with the date of elections being consistently pushed back, MEPs grew more frustrated, which was an issue on self-imposing deadlines in the Community as they were often delayed. Direct elections also damaged the European

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<sup>373</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 5 January 1977.

<sup>374</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/2/1 European Conservative Group Secretariat Meetings, 21 June 1976.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid, European Parliament Plenary Session, 10 March 1977.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

Parliament's credibility as they appeared unable to deliver on large projects. The delay also damaged the European project as it would remain undemocratic until direct elections occurred.

Furthermore, Kirk stated that 'we cannot be held to be totally committed to every dot and comma' of a document drafted by the Community.<sup>377</sup> He proposed that the total number of seats should remain between 300 and 400 and that they should be distributed in accordance with Patijn's report.<sup>378</sup> France had managed to resolve one matter around direct elections. There had been concern that the French constitution would prevent direct elections. Yet, by 8 June 1977 it was ruled that the constitution did allow France to hold them.<sup>379</sup> Other member states were (similar to Britain) keen for elections to take place the following year, apart from Denmark. Groupings began to work more closely together on campaign strategies. The British Labour Party began to further integrate within the Socialists grouping despite having differences on the direction and speed in which the Community was developing. The British Conservative delegation had still not joined the CDs. Disagreement on an ideological and personal level separated the two. However, in 1977 both worked closely together to apply pressure on the Council to take a decision on direct elections. Hence it can be seen that direct elections had aligned the two groupings closer together for two reasons. First, to enable a coordinated campaign effort, and secondly to ensure the Council took a decision on the date of the elections.

Additionally, there were still issues surrounding the dual mandate, as the British Conservatives felt that holding both roles was too onerous. After his death, Kirk's election agent Kenneth Baker stated in an interview that 'I have no doubt that Sir Peter's death is a

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<sup>377</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 19 March 1977.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid.

<sup>379</sup> CCA, THCR 2.6.2.114.10, Conservative Party: House of Commons record of conversation (MT-1922 Committee Executive), 8 June 1977.



result of the pressure and overwork caused by his dual mandate'.<sup>380</sup> However, other nations including Germany and Denmark felt that a dual mandate was beneficial, claiming that it would allow clearer communication between the European Parliament and the members' national governments.<sup>381</sup> In 1976 it was decided that a dual mandate was compulsory.<sup>382</sup> This changed after direct elections, and from 1979 onwards the MEPs could opt to have a dual mandate.<sup>383</sup> Watts and Pilkington suggest that the dual mandate began to disappear in the UK after 1979 as many MEPs were discouraged from holding both posts.<sup>384</sup> Over time fewer MEPs held dual mandates which was important as communication between MEPs and MPs worsened. The issue was not fully resolved until 2009 under the Treaty of Lisbon, which prohibited MEPs from holding a dual mandate. The link between dual mandates and communication for national parliaments is also covered by Watts and Pilkington who conclude that fewer MEPs wanted to hold two posts simultaneously as it was too arduous to balance the responsibilities of their national parliament and the European Parliament.<sup>385</sup> However, their account does not examine the British Conservative MEPs.

Another issue for Britain was on the system of voting. MPs were divided: some supported Proportional Representation (PR) while others supported a First Past the Post system (FPTP). Conservatives such as Bernard Braine were in favour of FPTP as they felt that it would be incorrect to have two systems of voting, one for European Parliament elections and another for Westminster elections.<sup>386</sup> In 1977 there were almost 100 MPs that were against PR for a

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<sup>380</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Times*, 18 April 1977.

<sup>381</sup> As seen in the previous chapter it had also led to clear communication between British MEPs and Westminster.

<sup>382</sup> PREM 16/1257, Direct Election Select Committee report, 7 November 1976.

<sup>383</sup> PREM 19/53, Cabinet Secretary incoming brief to Prime Minister, 4 May 1979.

<sup>384</sup> CCA, CCO 508/7/3 British Conservative MEP delegation Committee meeting minutes, 18 June 1979. Or see D. Watts and C. Pilkington, *Britain in the European Union Today*, 3rd edition, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p.197.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid, pp.183-201.

<sup>386</sup> CCA, THCR 2.6.2.114.10, Conservative Party: House of Commons record of conversation (MT-1922 Committee Executive), 5 June 1977.

similar reason.<sup>387</sup> Thatcher saw the European Parliament as a place where Conservatism competed against Socialism. She felt that if PR voting went ahead it would be a victory for the Liberals and make the task of defeating Socialism difficult.<sup>388</sup> Thatcher remained firm in her anti-PR views as there were fears that some of the Conservative MPs who had been against PR would change their views to ensure elections occurred on time, particularly those who were Conservative MEPs.

The Conservative MEPs supported Thatcher on the voting system believing a switch to PR could further delay direct elections.<sup>389</sup> Later in the year the House of Commons voted in favour of FPTP. The Labour Party had voted 146 for PR and 116 for FPTP. All thirteen Liberals voted in favour of PR, while 61 Conservatives voted for PR and 196 for FPTP.<sup>390</sup> The result led to the Community being unable to set a date for European Elections, as other member states would use PR voting. Furthermore, there were still legislative and constitutional issues surrounding elections for the other eight member states to resolve. All this amounted to an early indication that the member states would struggle to pass legislation in their respective countries to allow European elections in 1978. However, by 1977, the states shared a similar view, which was that a date had to be set by the Council for elections in May 1978 to prevent momentum from being lost and to avert damaging the European Parliament's reputation. The system of voting again highlights the multi-level complexities surrounding direct elections. It also shows Thatcher being supportive of direct elections. This is very significant as it shows again her effort to support the Conservative MEPs. Her support also encouraged British Conservative MEPs to work with their European counterparts, which

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary session, 8 December 1977.

is not discussed in other works such as Simon Hix's which examine grouping relations prior to direct elections.<sup>391</sup>

In early 1977, the Community had to determine how to promote direct elections. It could not mount a large campaign as it lacked the finances and expertise.<sup>392</sup> The Commission in conjunction with the European Parliament felt that the best course of action was to try to raise the interest of 'opinion makers.' Juliet Lodge argues that the Community hoped it would lead to a multiplier effect as large media organisations would be able to convey the information to their wide audiences.<sup>393</sup> They wanted to reach farmers, consumers, and youth organisations, amongst other groups.<sup>394</sup> The Commission also agreed to hold a series of seminars on direct elections for journalists, at which MEPs were also invited to speak.<sup>395</sup> The Community also arranged visits to Brussels for some of their target groups, particularly senior civil servants, and in 1977 the European Parliament received almost 20,000 visitors.<sup>396</sup> These activities raised awareness of the Community and its infrastructure. Richard Corbett highlights that an important by-product of the European Parliament's activities was the cultivation by the Community of its relationship with large media outlets that would be used in future years to communicate complicated developments to a wider audience.<sup>397</sup> However, as can be seen the promotion of direct elections was a Community effort which was not led by the European Parliament, showing in this period in time the limited influence it had in the Community.

The Commission had also agreed to publish a European Election Institution Programme (EEIP) which Juliet Lodge argues had three objectives. First, it provided non-partisan

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<sup>391</sup> See. S. Hix, A. Noury, and G. Roland, eds, pp.32-54 or W. van der Brug, and C. de Vreese, eds, pp. 5-15.

<sup>392</sup> A poster campaign, for example, would cost nearly five million European Currency Units (ECU): which was more than the entire budget of the Community in 1977, see: Lodge and Herman, p.47.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>395</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, London Commission Office, European Parliament publicity report, 15 February 1976.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> R. Corbett, pp.70-110.

information about the Community and its institutions' accomplishments, policies, and prospects to the public. Secondly, it assisted the European Parliament in raising awareness of the institution to ensure a large turnout for voting; and thirdly, it increased public knowledge of the Community.<sup>398</sup> The Commission placed emphasis on the non-partisan role of the EEIP.<sup>399</sup> However, it struggled with the timing of the EEIP as the question of when elections would occur remained an issue due to member states not passing the necessary legislation. However, Britain unlike other member states, had experience of how to coordinate a large campaign effort for the Community, because of the 1975 referendum.

The Conservatives had begun to suggest how the Community could assist with the chronic economic difficulties faced throughout Europe including in Britain. They also made a greater effort in trying to address how they would help keep the traditions and individuality of Britain intact in the face of a more united Europe.<sup>400</sup> This was an important point as polls in 1977 suggested that 50 per cent of the public were interested in how the Community would ease chronic economic difficulties, while 31 per cent were concerned with how Britain could keep its individuality in Europe.<sup>401</sup> All this demonstrated the need for the large effort behind raising public interest in the elections. The Community also used this media coverage to try and understand the European public. Moreover, Richard Corbett argues that the Commission for the first time tried to explain how the Community functioned.<sup>402</sup> The British Conservatives had been supportive of elections and promoted the positives of membership and the role of the European Parliament in Britain. It was the first time a joint effort had been made across all the member states to raise awareness of the Community. It also shows that

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<sup>398</sup> J. Lodge and V. Herman, p.30.

<sup>399</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, London Commission Office, Direct Election and publicity report, 29 March 1977.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid.

<sup>401</sup> Eurobarometer, no.7, 5 July 1977, p.69.

<sup>402</sup> R. Corbett, p.105.

the Conservative Party under Thatcher supported and worked with their MEPs on direct elections.

Furthermore, with direct elections looming the European Parliament was under more scrutiny, particularly regarding its cost. MEPs were consistently attacked regarding the site of the European Parliament. Neil Marten (Conservative MP for Banbury) stated that:

It is the longest running farce in Europe, and the people responsible for it are sitting round me now. I say that because they have done nothing about it. They have not blocked it or had a 'demo' about it. They go on and on from one place to another. I hope that they realise how very foolish they look in the eyes of those of us who sit outside the Community.<sup>403</sup>

Comments that were made by MPs such as Marten greatly contributed to causing a divide between MPs and MEPs. It even led to certain MEPs feeling disillusioned as was often seen in the comments made in the British Conservative MEP committee meetings where MEPs such as Hugh Dykes stated in response to Marten's comments that 'we are not bound by our Westminster colleagues we are part of a multi-national grouping and can act accordingly'.<sup>404</sup> Regarding the site of the European Parliament, Conservative MEPs wanted this to be Brussels although some felt that there was no need to change where MEPs met in Luxembourg and Strasbourg.<sup>405</sup> Giscard d'Estaing and Thorn brought the matter to the European Council meeting in London on 29-30 July 1977. Conservative and Labour views aligned at the meeting as both agreed that Britain should remain uninvolved.<sup>406</sup> However, by 1977 some had begun to feel that it was too costly and time consuming for MEPs to regularly

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<sup>403</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 935 cc1216-65, 18 July 1977.

<sup>404</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/7/4, British Conservative Committee meeting notes, 27 July 1977.

<sup>405</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/16 European Parliament site, 14 April 1977.

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*

commute to Luxembourg and Strasbourg.<sup>407</sup> Moreover, as mentioned previously, on several occasions British MEPs struggled to return to the House of Commons in time for important votes. Prime Minister James Callaghan and Kirk supported the idea of the site being moved. Furthermore, the European Parliament required better facilities in order to improve the efficiency of committee work which was undertaken in Brussels. Thatcher had also suggested that it was important for Britain not to completely side with France and Italy on changing the location of the institution.<sup>408</sup> She still felt the matter could be used as a bargaining chip for future negotiations within the Community.<sup>409</sup> The site of the European Parliament was a controversial topic as Belgium, Luxembourg, and France wanted the permanent site due to the financial incentives it provided. The issue was raised in the House of Commons on a number of occasions.<sup>410</sup> With much discussion of direct elections, anti-EEC members of the House of Commons attacked the ineffectiveness of the European Parliament. The select committee for direct elections thus decided that the issues of both the site of the European Parliament and the salaries of the MEPs would be discussed in the near future.<sup>411</sup> It is clear from this that direct elections encouraged more scrutiny of the European Parliament. It also provided an opportunity for MPs such as Neil Marten to attack the European Parliament and its ineffectiveness on core issues such as its location. The negative remarks in the House of Commons contributed to some Conservative MEPs acting more autonomously in the European Parliament.

The European Election Information Programme (EEIP) led by the European Commission London Office in 1978 also faced difficulties as direct elections neared. Initially, the London Office had not selected the advertising agencies that would be used to develop the EEIP. The

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<sup>407</sup> TNA, PREM 16/1264, European Council Meeting Steering Committee, 22 July 1977.

<sup>408</sup> Most member states by 1977 were in favour of moving the European Parliament.

<sup>409</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/16 European Parliament site, 4 April 1977.

<sup>410</sup> See *Hansard*, HC Deb 07 vol 934 cc1436-569, 7 July 1977.

<sup>411</sup> Parliamentary Archive, HC/CL/CH/2/3/15, European Parliament: Directly Elected Assembly, Committee session, 9 June 1978.

situation was exacerbated as the other eight member states had already selected and announced theirs in the European Parliament.<sup>412</sup> It also gave the impression that Britain was uninterested regarding European elections. However, the London Office was not accountable for this as it required approval by the government which was still forthcoming. There were factors that both the Conservatives and the Labour government felt should be taken into account when selecting a public relations organisation for the EEIP. The Conservatives did not want organisations that were American-orientated or working on political campaigns in the near future.<sup>413</sup> The Labour government agreed, and also preferred approaching public relations organisations rather than advertising firms. Juliet Lodge argues this was because they felt that public relations organisations could be more ‘neutral’, rather than advertising firms who specialised in the ‘hard-sell’.<sup>414</sup> The decision was eventually fast-tracked, and it was announced that Lintas had won the contract in late autumn 1978.<sup>415</sup>

By 1978 the Conservative Party and Thatcher wanted the government to provide funding of up to 50 per cent of the maximum permitted election campaign cost for prospective MEPs.<sup>416</sup> This was meant to be a ‘one-off’ arrangement to ensure the first European elections ran smoothly. Thatcher’s shadow cabinet also proposed that certain expenses for campaigning in a European election should be reimbursed by the government in this arrangement.<sup>417</sup> It was clear from this that the Conservative Party wanted to minimise the cost of European elections. It shows that the European election for the Conservative Party as a whole was another obstacle which needed to be overcome as elections required financial resources.

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<sup>412</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 3 March 1978.

<sup>413</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/7, European Parliament: Direct Elections (5), 5 May 1978.

<sup>414</sup> J. Lodge and V. Herman, p.11.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid, p.13.

<sup>416</sup> CCA, THCR, MSS 2.6.1.163. House of Commons. Shadow Cabinet Atkins to MT Rhodesia and European Elections, 19 November 1978.

<sup>417</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/8, Cost of Direct Elections, 5 November 1978.

Regarding legislative matters, the government had not completed all the work necessary for European elections to take place in 1978. Regardless of the direct elections select committee's achievements, its work could not be made law until May, when direct elections were meant to occur. The Conservatives proposed that the committee met more than once a week, which would allow the bill to get royal assent by June.<sup>418</sup> However, this would still mean that the UK would miss the Community's May-June election deadline.<sup>419</sup> Additionally, the Conservatives demanded that the Boundary Commission immediately produce its work after royal assent. Again, this demonstrates the number of difficulties surrounding direct elections, as well as the problems of the Community imposing deadlines for direct elections.

There was some division over how constituencies should be divided for MEPs. The first proposal was known as the 'Lawson system', which envisaged that there should be 54 constituencies electing 78 MEPs. The second proposal was the 'Roper system', which grouped together parliamentary constituencies to form Euro-constituencies.<sup>420</sup> Both systems had similar advantages and disadvantages. The positives were that they both offered simple solutions to complex problems as they could be implemented with relative ease. The Lawson system particularly simplified the matter as the electoral register was already based on local governmental areas and counties were familiar with natural divisions. The major drawback with Lawson's proposal was that there was a significant difference in size between constituencies: the electorate per Euro-member varied from 187,000 (Highlands and Islands) to 742,339 (Surrey).<sup>421</sup> However, the underlying problem for both systems was that the Labour government could reject them as each assumed that Parliament was doing the work of the Boundary Commission. The Labour government stated that it took these suggestions into

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<sup>418</sup> CCA, THCR, MSS 2.6.1.163. House of Commons. Shadow Cabinet Atkins to MT Rhodesia and European Elections, 19 November 1978.

<sup>419</sup> CCA, Thatcher Papers, MSS 2.6.1.161, Shadow Cabinet Hurd to MT, 19 August 1978.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid.



consideration and that the issue of direct elections would be solved at the Copenhagen Heads of Government meeting scheduled for April 1978. The issue of constituencies again shows the multi-level complexities of implementing direct elections. It also shows that the Conservative Party supported and worked with MEPs to ensure elections occurred.

Prior to the European Council meeting, economic issues were a major concern for the Community members as unemployment was high, and this was coupled with economic instability.<sup>422</sup> Due to this, the issue of European elections, though important, was not the central topic of discussion at the meeting. The Council meeting demonstrates that the European Parliament was not central to the heads of government or their overall European policy. After discussions it was determined that due to the legislative difficulties, member states were hoping that elections would be deferred by a year and should be held on 7-10 July 1979.<sup>423</sup> The meeting concluded the issues surrounding direct elections in 1978, as another year provided ample time for member states to make arrangements.

A set date for elections was difficult to achieve, as it required a cross-country collaborative effort which had never been done before. Furthermore, legislatively, a number of issues had to be ratified by all states involved which could be a lengthy process. Lastly, for Britain, Eurosceptics delayed the process through challenging matters including the role of the EEIP and how it should be used, as seen above in the issues surrounding the wording adopted by the EEIP, although this Eurosceptic bloc towards the European Parliament at this time was not very organised and consisted of four MEPs and twelve MPs approximately.<sup>424</sup> Throughout the period, the Conservative Party as a whole stayed committed to direct elections and wanted them to occur in 1978. It maintained the view that European elections

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<sup>422</sup> See J.W. Young, pp.127-153.

<sup>423</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Session of European Council, 7-8 April 1978.

<sup>424</sup> J. Lodge and V. Herman, p.114.

and the powers of the European Parliament were interlinked.<sup>425</sup> Overall, 1978 was a year in which the Community was placed under immense scrutiny because of direct elections. This intensified in 1978 because of the chronic economic difficulties member states were facing. For Britain the situation was further exacerbated because a UK general election and a European election would occur in 1979 both of which provided opportunities for MPs to question the role and function of the European Parliament.

Matters came to a head in 1979, with two issues resolved. The first was regarding the EEIP, which was due for publication prior to the election campaign. Lodge and Herman argue that the major obstacles to this occurred following a private lunch hosted by Roy Jenkins on 17 January 1979 in Strasbourg.<sup>426</sup> With prominent figures present from both the British Labour and Conservative parties the role of the EEIP could be discussed. It was reiterated again that the role of the EEIP was to provide educational material to the general public. It was also decided that this would be overseen by the European Commission offices including the London office.<sup>427</sup> As a result, Lintas was able to act swiftly to produce pamphlets to assist the public on the upcoming elections in a neutral manner. The matter was compounded by the role the *Organe de Contact* played which was to oversee the EEIP and approve the work of Lintas.<sup>428</sup> The decision allowed the EEIP to be produced quickly and in time for European elections.

The second issue which needed to be resolved was the date of the European elections. It was finally decided that they would be held on 7-10 July.<sup>429</sup> These dates were chosen for two reasons. First, in order to accommodate Britain as a general election was scheduled to take place in May. Secondly, it also allowed enough time for the other eight member states to

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<sup>425</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Session of European Council, 7-8 April 1978.

<sup>426</sup> J. Lodge and V. Herman, p.114.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid.

<sup>428</sup> The *Organe de Contact* were officials from the European Commission who oversaw direct election matters. See J. Lodge and V. Herman.

<sup>429</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Session of European Council, 7-8 April 1978.

resolve any legislative issues that might arise. There were no more delays on this front and elections went ahead on the proposed date and both Labour and Conservative MEPs focused on campaigning. The issues surrounding direct elections were multi-levelled as it effected the Community and member states entirely. Due to this an immense effort by all member states was required to achieve direct elections. Moreover, as seen on a number of occasions it was at European Council meetings that major decisions were taken, highlighting the importance of the forum. The matter of direct elections was one example of why the European Council became a legitimate Community institution under the Lisbon Treaty in 2009.

Regarding campaigning, the Labour Party disagreed with the Socialists grouping of the European Parliament who suggested members of the grouping should hold conferences targeting media members.<sup>430</sup> The Labour Party opted instead in May 1979 to hold an eve-of-poll rally in Leeds.<sup>431</sup> Labour had decided to run on an anti-European platform, with leading political figures such as Barbara Castle reiterating the party's concerns regarding the perceived federal direction in which the Community was heading. The three large issues that were attacked were Britain's budget contribution, the CAP, and the European Monetary System (EMS). Labour proposed that the British people, like Labour, opposed supranationalism.<sup>432</sup> In contrast, the Italian, German, and French Socialist MEPs focused more on the benefits of the European Parliament and what changes could make it a better institution.<sup>433</sup> The ability of the Socialists grouping to resolve internal disputes had been one of its greatest strengths. However, since the British Labour Party joined this became more difficult and made more acute due to direct elections.

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Economist*, 5 May 1979.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

Unlike Labour, the British Conservatives were not attached to a large grouping and thus did not have similar problems. Conservative MEPs ran a campaign similar to that of the UK general election held in the same year. It proposed that the Conservatives were the European Party in Britain but would continue nonetheless to safeguard parliamentary sovereignty. Thatcher and senior Conservatives wanted most of the decision-making process to remain in the Council of Ministers.<sup>434</sup> Yet the EPP had different views and objects in its programme. It wanted the European Council to provide direction to the Community. It envisaged the European Parliament gaining more powers and influence over the decision-making process, and specifically wanted the conciliation procedure to be used more regularly.<sup>435</sup> Finally, the EPP sought a framework for a United Europe consisting of a European Government and a Chamber of States as well as directly elected MEPs.<sup>436</sup> The Conservatives, like the Labour MEPs, did not agree with the views of their European counterparts. Thus, the campaigns show that as a whole, British MEPs had differing views to their Continental counterparts on the speed and direction the Community should develop.

The results of the European elections were similar to those of the general election in the same year which saw a victory for the Conservative Party. The Conservatives won 60 seats, Labour seventeen, and the SNP one.<sup>437</sup> Northern Ireland made up the remainder of the three seats out of the allocated 81. The newly elected Conservative MEPs could be split into three broad groups.<sup>438</sup> The first consisted of senior figures, including Sir Frederick Warner who had been the UK's ambassador to Japan, Sir Frederick Catherwood who was a director of the Development Council and Sir Henry Plumb, who had been chairman of the National Farmers

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<sup>434</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/7, Euro Elections Campaigning and Cost, 27 February 1979.

<sup>435</sup> Under the conciliation procedure (also referred to as the cooperation procedure) the Commission has to take the opinion of the European Parliament twice, under the consultation procedure the Commission only needs to consult the European Parliament once before acting. See, Nugent, p.176.

<sup>436</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Christian Democrats Direct Election Pamphlet, 8 July 1979.

<sup>437</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, The results: Voting figures in the Nine and composition of the new Parliament, 10 July 1979.

<sup>438</sup> See appendix for more details on the individual delegations that are discussed in this thesis.

Union and the European Farmers Union (Plumb would later go on to becoming the leader of the British Conservative MEP delegation). These members felt the European Parliament ‘was the future – and committed themselves thoroughly to it’.<sup>439</sup> The second group were younger politicians including Peter Price, Michael Welsh, Amédée Turner, and Christopher Prout.<sup>440</sup> Many of this group came from a legal background. Lastly, there was the so-called H-bloc, who were hostile to European integration, members of which included Brian Hord and Alasdair Hutton.<sup>441</sup> Twenty per cent of the Conservative MEPs were Eurosceptical, while the remainder were pro-European.<sup>442</sup> Moreover, James Spicer (MEP for Wessex) was the one of the two members who held a dual mandate, which is very significant. Despite its burden, the dual mandate had previously ensured clear communication between the European Parliament and Westminster and with the reduction of MEPs holding dual mandates after direct elections, communications would worsen in the forthcoming years; this thesis argues that this development damaged the relationship between MEPs and MPs. More importantly, the three groups and the majority of the individuals mentioned from this delegation remained MEPs until the early 1990s.<sup>443</sup>

Yet overall, the Socialists grouping had the most success in Europe as a whole taking 113 seats out of a total of 410 in the European Parliament. They had great success in Germany, France, and Italy making them the largest grouping in the European Parliament despite the lack of seats won by the British Labour Party. The EPP totalled 107 seats, doing similarly well in Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands.<sup>444</sup> Hence they were the second largest grouping in the Parliament. However, due to the British Conservatives winning 61 seats and Denmark

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<sup>439</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>440</sup> Prout would also become leader of the British Conservative MEPs in 1987.

<sup>441</sup> The term H-Bloc was coined as many of the Eurosceptics’ surnames in the grouping began with the letter H.

<sup>442</sup> Michael Welsh Diary entry, 17 August 1979.

<sup>443</sup> See Appendix for full list of all British Conservative MEPs throughout this period and their backgrounds.

<sup>444</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, The results. Voting figures in the Nine and composition of the new Parliament, 10 July 1979. The Socialists Grouping won 35 seats in the FRG, 22 seats in France, and thirteen seats in Italy; while the EPP won 42 seats in the FRG, 30 seats in Italy, and ten seats in the Netherlands.

three seats, the European Democrats totalled 64 seats which made them the third largest grouping. The British Conservatives thus had a strong independent base. But a drawback for the Conservatives was that they would be seen as a non-diverse British lobby as the grouping had only managed to secure two seats in Denmark outside of the UK. The European election also illustrated how they could be used to assist in forecasting general election results or test the public attitudes on European policies.

A weakness of the European elections was the low turnout of voters, which showed a lack of confidence in the Community by the people of Europe. The Community as a whole had a turnout of 61 per cent. Britain had the lowest turnout of the nine with 33 per cent, less than half that expected in a general election.<sup>445</sup> Turnout was low in Britain for a number of reasons. First, the largest decision regarding the Community had been made only four years earlier in the referendum. Richard Corbett suggests that between this and the 1979 general election the British electorate was fatigued.<sup>446</sup> The low turnout was also attributed to a lack of prominent candidates. However, Lodge and Herman oppose this argument, suggesting that even where there were prominent figures standing, such as Barbara Castle in Greater Manchester, the turnout was still relatively low.<sup>447</sup> A more convincing explanation for the low turnout was the lack of media priority attached to the European Parliament, something that would remain a concern throughout the 1970s and beyond. Under-reporting was a problem on radio and TV, reporters for both of which did not attend the European Parliament outside of the run-up to direct elections. One of the main reasons British media neglected European Parliament matters was the cost of broadcasting from the European Broadcasting Union, and sending camera crews, presenters, and reporters to Strasbourg or Brussels.<sup>448</sup> Thus the British public were less informed about European Parliament affairs and more

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<sup>445</sup> Ibid.

<sup>446</sup> R. Corbett, p.107.

<sup>447</sup> J. Lodge and V. Herman, p.114

<sup>448</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

concerned with issues such as unemployment and industrial relations. The public felt these were issues for MPs in Westminster and not for MEPs. Moreover, it was easier to convey the problems with the European Parliament through its cost, which would be an underlying long-term problem for the European Parliament.

Overall, it can be seen that in the 1970s direct elections were the largest issue for the European Parliament, as they involved a tremendous cross-country effort, due to their multi-levelled concerns. It impacted the Conservative MEPs greatly from the time they entered the European Parliament in January 1973. The MEPs and the wider Conservative Party were in favour of direct elections. They contributed a great amount to this policy throughout the 1970s, including on the distribution of seats and how they should be shared amongst the UK's constituencies. Thatcher and her cabinet were supportive of British Conservative MEPs. They also worked and agreed with the MEPs on many matters on direct elections. However, direct elections led to some MPs speaking negatively about the MEPs which caused some of the latter to become disillusioned with Westminster. As observed by Richard Corbett, hostility arose because many feared direct elections would lead to the European Parliament seeking more powers.<sup>449</sup> This view is also shared by Claes de Vreese.<sup>450</sup> A side effect of European elections was that the Conservative delegation worked more closely with other groupings, namely the EPP, more than it had previously, which also concurs with Simon Hix's account.<sup>451</sup> Yet the accounts above do not discuss the importance of Thatcher supporting direct elections. Her support also encouraged Conservative MEPs to work closer with the EPP as has been shown in this chapter. The largest failure regarding direct elections was the lack of support by the British public as manifested in the low turnout, and this would continue to be a problem throughout the 1980s. The chapter demonstrates that despite the

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<sup>449</sup> R. Corbett, pp.70-110.

<sup>450</sup> W. van der Brug, and C. de Vreese, eds, p.5.

<sup>451</sup> S. Hix, A. Noury, and G. Roland, eds, pp.32-54.

importance of direct elections, many significant decisions were taken by the Labour government, other member state governments and other Community institutions as a whole which shows the limited influence of the European Parliament in this period. The European Parliament being viewed as an insignificant institution also contributed to the low turnout in Britain. Moreover, low turnout remained a sensitive topic for all British MEPs as it damaged the legitimacy of the EP. Lastly, with direct elections complete and fewer MEPs holding a dual mandate, communication between Westminster and the European Parliament would be affected in the future.



## **Section Two: European Integration and the Conservative Party 1973-79**

The following section will explore the internal situation of the EP as the Community considered Greek membership of the Community. The Conservatives were divided on this matter as some felt that enlargement would mean Britain would have to contribute more financially to the Community. Others, including MEPs, felt that in a Cold War world Greek accession would prevent the Soviet Union expanding.

The other matter that arose was the development of the European Monetary System (EMS) in response to the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil crisis. Many felt this crisis had highlighted the weakness of the Community as members (including Britain and France) sought bilateral agreements with OPEC member nations over oil. Thus, EMS was meant to lead to a commitment to deeper integration, over which the Conservatives were hesitant. Yet EMS was suggestive of an important recurring theme for the Community, which was the tendency, when faced with crisis, to seek further integration.

The section will show that under Thatcher, Conservative MEPs continued to hold strong relations with the Conservative leadership. Moreover, it will demonstrate how Thatcher took a pragmatic approach to the European Parliament: a significant point, as by demonstrating her pragmatic approach to the European Parliament, the thesis will contribute to the wider debate surrounding her attitudes towards the Community as a whole.

### **Chapter Three: The Conservative Party Leadership and the European Parliament**

The following chapter will discuss the wider problems within the Conservative Party in the period from 1973 to 1979, in which occurred the 1975 referendum and three general elections. MEPs played an active role in all of these events. It is important to discuss how these events effected the Conservative MEPs, they campaigned in the referendum and due to the dual mandate, some MEPs lost their seats. The chapter will assist in examining the complex relationship between MEPs and MPs, particularly in relation to their differing views on the EP. It will also show that Thatcher took a pragmatic approach to the development of the EP and supported the Conservative MEPs on important matters such as increasing their salaries.

1973-74 was a very difficult period for the European Parliament as external events influenced its conduct. The energy crisis had caused economic problems. Moreover, the EEC was hampered by vast changes occurring within the Nine.<sup>452</sup> Willy Brandt, West Germany's Chancellor, was forced to resign, French President Georges Pompidou also died in the same year, and this coincided with the end of the Heath government. Furthermore, seven of the member states had coalition governments, while the other two (including Britain), had minority governments. The Labour Party had a majority of three, and Harold Wilson had promised Britain's renegotiation with the EEC and a referendum on British membership. By 1977 Labour had lost its majority and formed a pact with the Liberal Party which meant the Liberals would support Labour in return for pre-legislative consultation.<sup>453</sup> The arrangement showed the difficult position the Labour government was in at the time which limited the

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<sup>452</sup> The nine were all the member states in the Community since the first round of accession in 1973. For a detailed account of the internal situation of the nine see, Dedman, p.130.

<sup>453</sup> R. Wainwright, *The Liberals and Liberal Democrats: Unfinished business*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p.173. They lost two by-elections in 1976, and two MPs broke away to form the Scottish Labour Party

amount they could achieve. Internally, the Conservative Party was also in a difficult position following the departure of Enoch Powell, who had provided leadership to the right-wing of the party. As Philip Norton argues, following Powell's departure, the right-wing group 'ceased to be systemic or clearly identifiable'.<sup>454</sup> Without Powell in 1974 many backbenchers and anti-marketers did not take positions on European legislative matters in a systematic manner as they had under Powell. Moreover, Thatcher replaced Heath as leader of the Conservative Party in 1975. All these matters impacted Conservative MEPs, which will be explored in greater detail.

The 1974 general elections were a major concern for those in the Conservative delegation, as they too had to campaign to retain their seats which limited their work in the European Parliament, highlighting another issue of a dual mandate. Additionally, the Conservatives faced open criticism by MEPs. The Socialist Group's French leader Francis Vals gave his full support to the British Labour Party in the upcoming general election. He suggested that it was 'the only party capable of solving Britain's economic and social difficulties'.<sup>455</sup> Additionally, another EPP support staff worker Aden Jensen had stated that the Conservative delegation was filled with 'has beens or time wasters'.<sup>456</sup> Conservative MEPs retorted by criticising the lack of enthusiasm showed by members of the EP to changing the cumbersome procedures and processes of the parliament.<sup>457</sup> However, despite the Conservatives losing both general elections in 1974, and Heath's support within the party dwindling, there was little change to the personnel of the British delegation of MEPs.<sup>458</sup> This continuity was a consequence of Labour winning more seats in the House of Commons in February 1974 but not having an

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<sup>454</sup> P. Norton, *Conservative Dissidents: Dissent within the Parliamentary Conservative Party 1970-74*, (London: Temple Smith, 1978), p.280.

<sup>455</sup> British Library, *The Economist*, 'The sovereignty stakes', 16 February 1974.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> CCA, GNWR, Baron Gordon-Walker of Leyton, Private Papers, MEP morale, 21 October 1974.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid. For more on the 1974 elections see R. Blake, *From Peel to Thatcher*, (London: Fourth Estate, 1998), pp.319-332.

overall majority.<sup>459</sup> Peter Kirk suggested that if the Liberals and Conservatives wished they could re-evaluate the MEPs and select new representatives. However, he later preferred to 'let sleeping dogs lie.'<sup>460</sup> Kirk did not want his delegation to change drastically as it would impact the conduct of the grouping that was only formed one year earlier. The 1974 elections also showed how much a general election could potentially affect the MEPs. It also encouraged the MEPs to push for direct elections.

The changes that did occur, however, strengthened the experience available to the Conservative delegation. The most significant member to join was Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker who had experience of European politics having served on the British delegation to the Council of Europe. Dodds-Parker avoided the issue of the dual mandate as he had lost his seat in the UK Parliament, while opting to stay on as an MEP.<sup>461</sup> Hugh Dykes who worked in the Minister of Defence in Heath's government also became a MEP in 1974 and was supportive of the EP, as was Ralph Howell who was a British farmer and a chair of a local National Farmers Union.<sup>462</sup> However, while there were further seats that might have been replaced, there was also a lack of enthusiasm among Conservative MPs about becoming MEPs. A reason for this was the dual mandate. Neil Marten, who was a leading opponent of the EEC even commented that 'physically, it could lead to a breakdown for people',<sup>463</sup> while others had opposed the European Parliament, believing its ultimate objective was to undermine national parliaments. Some Conservative members felt that the European Parliament was a weak institution and with 'almost negligible powers had little purpose or

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<sup>459</sup> For a detailed study of the 1974 general elections see T. Heppell, (ed), *Leaders of the Opposition: From Churchill to Cameron*, (London: Palgrave, 2011), chapter seven.

<sup>460</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Economist*, 'As ever', 16 March 1974.

<sup>461</sup> See section one, MEPs in the European Parliament.

<sup>462</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/1, Europe Policy Group MEP delegation, 6 December 1974.

<sup>463</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 901 cc1692-82203, 4 December 1975. It should be noted that Neil Merten was the chairman of the National Referendum campaign in 1975 and was an inveterate and leading opponent of the EEC.

function'.<sup>464</sup> There were, however, members in the House of Lords who found the post of MEP appealing. Six out of the twenty original MEPs were Lords. Unsurprisingly, then, the two general elections did not alter the conduct of the Conservative delegation in the European Parliament. However, as seen from the remarks by MPs above there was some hostility towards the MEPs which alienated some of the MEPs as these MEPs tended to avoid engaging with Westminster Parliament and focused more on their European Parliament duties, such as Committee work.<sup>465</sup> The general elections also illustrated how mandatory dual mandates remained a concern for the Conservatives.

The replacement of Heath by Thatcher also affected the wider Conservative Party as well as the MEPs. Eric Caines observes that 'her elevation to the leadership had taken many by surprise'.<sup>466</sup> Furthermore, MEPs including Kirk were initially sceptical of Thatcher.<sup>467</sup> Heath had selected the delegation and had worked closely with the MEPs. However, Kirk feared the MEPs would not work as closely with Thatcher on central concerns.<sup>468</sup> Yet as seen previously, Thatcher, in this period from 1975 to 1979 would support the MEPs on a number of issues including increasing their salaries, working towards direct elections and ensuring that MEPs would have stronger ties with the EPP. Much has been written about Thatcher's early European policy. David Butler and Uwe Kitzinger have argued that she had little time to outline her views on European policy with an impending referendum on Community membership.<sup>469</sup> Others such as Richard Vinen have also suggested that 'Thatcher had never opposed British membership of the European Community/Union'.<sup>470</sup> John Young, however, suggests there is evidence that she was more Eurosceptic in her views as all anti-EEC

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<sup>464</sup> British Library Newspaper Archive, *The Economist*, 'The sovereignty stakes', 16 February 1974.

<sup>465</sup> Author interview with Sir Jack Stewart-Clark, 7 February 2015.

<sup>466</sup> E. Caines, *Heath and Thatcher in Opposition*, (London: Palgrave, 2016), p.237.

<sup>467</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/1/2 European Conservative Group Correspondence between Peter Kirk and grouping, 5 March 1975.

<sup>468</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/1, Europe Policy Group MEP delegation, 17 February 1975.

<sup>469</sup> D. Butler and U. Kitzinger, *The 1975 Referendum*, 2nd edition, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p.76.

<sup>470</sup> R. Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era*, (London: Pocket Books, 2009), p.81.

Conservative MPs had given their support in the candidacy race.<sup>471</sup> It is clear that Thatcher took the leadership at a time where the party was divided over the Community. However, as mentioned above, she had supported the MEPs in many areas, which adds to these debates. Conservative MEPs are rarely mentioned in any of the literature which examines Thatcher, despite it clearly showing her pragmatic approach to European policy. Moreover, MEPs including Kirk were able to communicate their views with Thatcher clearly; again, this was partly due to the dual mandate.

The referendum in 1975 was a historic event in British–Community relations, Butler and Kitzingers stated that it was ‘the most exhilarating event in British politics since the war’.<sup>472</sup> Furthermore, MEPs, like MPs, played a role in this process. MEPs at European Parliament plenary sessions asked questions that would demonstrate the value of the Community.<sup>473</sup> Lord O’Hagan played a vital role in convincing the European Parliament to agree to produce European pamphlets that could be distributed in Britain.<sup>474</sup> Heath also played an active role in the ‘Britain in Europe’ campaign, as did the British Conservative MEPs, many of whom were selected by Heath. Peter Kirk, Brendon Rhys, and James Scott-Hopkins all travelled to various parts of the UK to promote the advantages of membership.<sup>475</sup> Henry Plumb (who would later become an MEP and leader of the MEP delegation) also worked to promote the EEC, and was even considered as a potential director for the ‘Yes’ Campaign.<sup>476</sup> Butler and Kitzingers note that Thatcher, Wilson, and Thorpe were all participants in the Yes campaign, and the fact that the leaders from the three major parties were on the same side played a significant role in deciding the referendum.<sup>477</sup> Additionally, Mark Baimbridge suggests that British business was crucial in funding the ‘Yes’ cause: the ‘No’ campaign had £133,000

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<sup>471</sup> J.W. Young, *Britain and European Unity 1945–92*, (New York: Macmillan, 1992), p.137.

<sup>472</sup> D. Butler and U. Kitzingers, *The 1975 Referendum*, 2nd edition. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p.276.

<sup>473</sup> European University Institute, *Archives of the EU*, INT172, David Hannay Interview, 14 September 2011.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>475</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/4/1, 1975 European Referendum, MEP campaigns, 7 February 1975.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>477</sup> Institute of Contemporary British History, Witness Seminar: European Referendum, 5 June 1995, p.14.

available, while the 'Yes' campaign had £1.3 million.<sup>478</sup> These two factors worked in conjunction for the eventual result, with the Yes vote amounting to 67 per cent. The 1975 referendum was a historic event, and much has been written on the subject. Butler and Kitzinger have suggested the referendum served as a tool for party management as it provided a platform for various opinions to be voiced.<sup>479</sup> Stephen Wall has argued that it gave Wilson the necessary support for membership at a time when many in the Labour Party were turning against membership.<sup>480</sup> The legacy of the referendum, as Chris Cotton has argued, was one of great importance, since it created memories of bitter party infighting which served to create long-standing cross-party divisions over Europe.<sup>481</sup> However, these accounts do not take into consideration the role of the Conservative MEPs. As seen above, many Conservative MEPs played an active role in the 'Yes' campaign.

Following the result, the European Parliament was galvanised by the outcome and started to suggest ways the Community could develop. Many of the proposals envisaged a federal Community, with both economic and political union. However, the European Conservatives and Kirk disagreed, as Kirk believed that 'it was a referendum and a massive majority in favour of the Community as it is today'.<sup>482</sup> He believed that if progress towards a political union was pursued slowly then public opinion would organically follow. Regardless of Kirk's outlook, the fact that France had re-joined the economic Snake and that British membership of the Community was assured meant that key member states had shown their support for the Community.

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<sup>478</sup> M. Baimbridge, *The 1975 Referendum on Europe* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2007), p.220.

<sup>479</sup> See Butler and Kitzinger, *The 1975 Referendum*.

<sup>480</sup> S. Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Vol. II: From Rejection to Referendum, 1963-1975*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), Official History, pp.511-560.

<sup>481</sup> C. Cotton, 'The Labour Party and Membership of the European Economic Community 1961-83', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2010).

<sup>482</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *Financial Times*, 'Tory Change at EEC Parliament', 8 November 1975.

There were still many issues for Britain post-referendum, especially for the Labour Party, as it had to decide its future role in the European Parliament and the wider Community. The referendum was a significant moment in British history; as seen, the MEPs played an active role by securing funds and campaigning alongside Heath. Despite the vote to remain Kirk was quick to play down any plans the European Parliament had for immediate integration. Kirk's attitudes highlighted how the Conservative MEPs wanted integration to occur more slowly compared to their European counterparts. A view that is consistent throughout the period from 1973 to 1992. The referendum was a significant moment, and this thesis shows that MEPs contributed greatly, including securing funds and promoting the Community across Britain. Despite Butler and Kitzinger discussing the importance of party leaders supporting the 'Yes' vote and the role of British business funding the campaign,<sup>483</sup> they do not mention the MEPs and the important role they played.

Days after the referendum Labour had to determine responsibility for the party's affairs in the EP. The first possible option was that the National Executive Committee (NEC) should take control. However, the NEC's chairman was Tony Benn, who had opposed membership, and the balance of opinion on the NEC had been openly hostile towards the EEC, lobbying for Britain's withdrawal throughout 1974 and 1975.<sup>484</sup> Due to this hostility, it was decided that the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) Liaison Committee should take charge of European Parliament matters.<sup>485</sup> The relevant committee was made up of Labour ministers and backbenchers. After initial disagreement on which Labour members should be sent to the European Parliament, the Committee and Wilson had selected 48 potential candidates who reflected the varying views on Europe in the Labour Party.<sup>486</sup> Members included pro-Europeans such as Tam Dalyell (MP for West Lothian) and anti-Europeans such as John

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<sup>483</sup> D. Butler and U. Kitzinger, pp.60-87.

<sup>484</sup> Labour Party Archive, LRCC, 10/211, PLP Liaison Committee minutes, 11 June 1975.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid.



Prescott (MP for Hull East). However, a second issue still remained regarding the number of seats Labour could occupy. Britain was entitled to 36, and prior to this the Conservatives held eighteen, the Liberals two, and Lord O'Hagan sent as an independent. Labour wanted the same number of seats as the Conservatives, despite Wilson initially wanting to cut the Labour contingent to seventeen.<sup>487</sup> But pressure was placed on Wilson to obtain eighteen seats for the Labour delegation. Again it can be seen that Labour, like the Conservative Party had to make adjustments to incorporate MEPs into their overall party structure.

Prominent figures within the party such as Barbara Castle, despite having anti-European views, also wanted Labour to fully participate in the European Parliament. Most anti-EEC MEPs saw it as their duty to provide a counter-balance to the federal tendency of other MEPs. Hence Castle saw the EP 'as a good place to carry on the fight'.<sup>488</sup> The Conservatives were also determined to keep all their seats, and Kirk felt that this was reasonable as it reflected the results of the 1974 general election and he was supported on the matter by Thatcher,<sup>489</sup> again showing that the two were willing to work together. The obvious candidate that was first to depart was Lord O'Hagan. His European counterparts were saddened by this as he had regularly contributed to the EP's question time.<sup>490</sup> The second seat lost was Lord Gladwyn from the Liberal contingent.<sup>491</sup> Regardless, the Conservative delegation in the European Parliament was faced with another problem, as the arrival of Labour would strengthen the Socialist grouping, making it the largest in the European Parliament. Moreover, on reflection, some Conservative MEPs believed a tactic that benefited Labour in years to come was the application of Labour members for Community civil service posts,

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<sup>487</sup> Ibid, Wilson letter to Mellish.

<sup>488</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Economist*, 'Referendum Brief', 24 May 1975.

<sup>489</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/1/3, European Conservative Group Correspondence between Peter Kirk and Conservative Parliamentary Party, 15 June 1975.

<sup>490</sup> UOP, The European Integration Archive, Parliament in session European Parliament, 8 August 1975.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

impacting upon the wider workings of the Communities.<sup>492</sup> Some Conservative MEPs believed this practice assisted in making the Conservative Party more Eurosceptic, as they felt it made the Community more left-leaning.

With Thatcher as Conservative leader and the referendum ensuring Britain's continued membership, the Conservative Party had to determine its wider policy regarding the various Community institutions, and how they should develop.<sup>493</sup> Thatcher felt the European Parliament's power and direct elections were interlinked and needed to be addressed together. The Conservatives created a policy group which aimed to examine the relationship between the EP and the Westminster Parliament.<sup>494</sup> The Conservative Party was more concerned with European integration, which included the manner and speed in which the Community should develop. Thatcher felt that 'setting dates are not the best spur to progress'.<sup>495</sup> Kirk agreed, and both felt that 'member states should develop the habit of working together' to develop the Community.<sup>496</sup> Thatcher suggested that the Conservatives should be more pragmatic towards the developments of the EP.<sup>497</sup> Her statement here is very significant as her views towards the EP help illustrate her wider attitudes towards the Community which have been discussed in the wider literature. David Reynolds suggests that she was no different to any other European leader and defended British interests.<sup>498</sup> Hugo Young has likened Thatcher's views on Europe to that of 'an agnostic who still attended church'.<sup>499</sup> However, her view towards the European Parliament adds specifically with John Young's examination of her, who concluded that she was pragmatic in her policy towards Europe (like Harold Wilson).<sup>500</sup> Her pragmatic attitudes

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<sup>492</sup> Author Interview with Patricia Rawlings, 1 December 2016.

<sup>493</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/5, European Parliament: Direct Elections (2), 3 February 1976.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid.

<sup>495</sup> CCA, THRC, 2.6.1.108, Community developments and MEPs report, 6 July 1975.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid.

<sup>498</sup> D. Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (London: Routledge, 2000), p.267.

<sup>499</sup> H. Young, *This Blessed Plot Churchill to Blair*, (London: Macmillan, 1999), p.185.

<sup>500</sup> J.W. Young, p.136.

towards the European Parliament from 1976 to 1988 supports Young's argument as she took a pragmatic view of the European Parliament.

There were also other points of division between Conservative MEPs and MPs, namely their preferences over the way in which the Community should develop. The Conservatives wanted the Council of Ministers to remain the decision-making body in the Community. Douglas Hurd (MP for mid-Oxfordshire) reiterated the point in a speech after the referendum at Swinton Conservative College. The Conservatives did not want the Council to be 'pre-empted or deflected by the European Council'.<sup>501</sup> They also wanted to maintain the veto option in the Council of Ministers, a view that was shared by other member states.<sup>502</sup> MEPs, however, disagreed, as they wanted the Commission to remain the principle initiating body of the Community as well as providing administrative services necessary to carry out the will of the Council of Ministers.<sup>503</sup> However, Thatcher insisted that the Commission should take on a limited say on foreign policy, arguing that the area of foreign policy was not adequately provided for in the treaties.<sup>504</sup> On this, Conservative MEPs agreed.<sup>505</sup> The European Parliament was an institution to provide some form of democratic control over draft Community legislation. However, the Conservatives were unclear on how the EP should develop, hence the need for the creation of the working group.<sup>506</sup> In general, the only disagreements between MEPs led by Kirk and the Conservative Party led by Thatcher were regarding the relationship between the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. The MEPs wanted more powers for the EP which would limit the influence of the Council and Commission. This was because they shared views with Thatcher's predecessor, Edward Heath, who had originally selected the delegation which added to the image of the MEPs

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<sup>501</sup> CCA, THRC, 2.6.1.108, Community developments and MEPs report, 17 July 1975.

<sup>502</sup> For a detailed account on the Council of Ministers and the attitudes of member states see J. Patterson and M. Shackleton, pp.68-96.

<sup>503</sup> CCA, THRC, 2.6.1.108, Community developments and MEPs report, 17 July 1975.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid, Future of European Institutions, 20 July 1975.

<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

<sup>506</sup> CCA, HLSC, 2.42.2.51, Papers of Lord Halisham, European Parliament developments, 3 July 1976.

being a Heathite wing of the party. Yet Thatcher's views towards the EP were not Eurosceptic between 1975 and 1979, and she was willing to be pragmatic towards its developments.

The looming issue of direct elections and the referendum meant that Thatcher as leader had little time to outline her own European policy. Moreover, less than a year after the referendum the political focus shifted to Wilson's resignation as Prime Minister and the Labour succession battle, which meant that Thatcher was again side-tracked and did not have the political space to outline her own agenda. However, in April 1976 with Callaghan installed as Prime Minister, she took the opportunity to outline her own views on the Community, amongst other issues, in a document entitled *The Right Approach*. Regarding defence, Thatcher advocated that NATO should provide the framework for Britain. She believed that the European Community was increasingly playing a larger part in domestic and foreign policy. She went on to state that 'we forget the opportunities within the Community and seem obsessed with the difficulties it faces'.<sup>507</sup> Again this shows similarities between Heath's and Thatcher's policy towards the Community in this period. Moreover, in 1976 the Community was also very active regarding European Parliament matters particularly in resolving problems surrounding direct elections. Hence, the European Parliament received more attention from the British government.

A general election took place on 3 May 1979, five months before the end of the Labour government's maximum possible five-year term. It occurred after the Scottish devolution referendum held on 1 March 1979 failed to deliver a sufficient number of Yes votes to meet the threshold of 40 per cent of registered voters which caused a divide between the Labour

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<sup>507</sup> CCA. THCR, *The Right Approach*, 4 October 1976, p.69.

Party and the SNP, this left the Labour government in a vulnerable position.<sup>508</sup> Thatcher took this opportunity to table a motion of no confidence, which was passed by one vote: 311 for and 310 against.<sup>509</sup> The Conservatives also appeared more willing to engage with the European Community than Labour. However, the Conservative manifesto reiterated its concern over Parliamentary sovereignty, stating that ‘we will see that Parliament and no other body stands at the centre of the nation's life and decisions’.<sup>510</sup> The statement was partly a reference to the supposed rival power base represented by the trade unions, with their strike committees and pickets. Additionally, this statement also suggested that external organisations should not have a say in Britain’s decision-making, amongst which might be included institutions such as the European Parliament. For this reason, Thatcher wanted to keep the Community’s powers within the Council. The internal situation for Labour was worse because of the division in the party, with some Labour MPs feeling that the party had moved too far to the political left. Furthermore, the Community divided the party on another axis, as the party overall took an anti-European line. This was despite members such as Roy Jenkins, David Owen, and Shirley Williams who had all expressed their pro-European views. As described by Gilmour and Garnet, this, combined with rising anti-trade union sentiment, helped ensure that the Conservatives won the general election.<sup>511</sup>

At the European Council meeting held in Dublin 29-30 November 1979 Thatcher failed to secure a reduction in Britain’s net contribution to the Community. Resolving Britain’s budget contribution had been a core objective for the Conservative government with Thatcher stating that she had hoped for a ‘catalytic decision to be taken in Dublin’.<sup>512</sup> Because this did not materialise many Conservatives felt that the Council members had acted unfairly towards

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<sup>508</sup> For more on the Scottish referendum in 1979 see G. Hassan, eds., *Modern SNP: From Protest to Power*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

<sup>509</sup> TNA, PREM 16/2026, General Election information activities during General Election period, 7 April 1979.

<sup>510</sup> MTF, Conservative General Election Manifesto, 11 April 1979.

<sup>511</sup> I. Gilmour and M. Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories: The Conservatives since 1945*, (London: Fourth Estate, 1997), pp.292-320.

<sup>512</sup> TNA, PREM 19/41, Number Ten discussion on Council Meeting, 8 June 1979.

Britain. In his account, Alex May suggests that it was at this Council meeting where the rebate 'argument got into full swing',<sup>513</sup> while John Young argues that the rebate had the potential to create a strong Franco-German alliance putting Britain in the position it was in prior to accession, 'sidelined in Europe, without direct influence on the Continentals'.<sup>514</sup> The European Parliament was important in this debate as will be seen in the following chapter as it controlled the mechanism to authorise a rebate which meant the outcome of the Dublin Council meeting also led the Conservative MEPs into disputes with other groupings.<sup>515</sup> Early signs of this can be detected amongst Conservative MEPs.<sup>516</sup> In December Scott-Hopkins called Thatcher to suggest that the EDG could attempt to reject the 1980 budget in the EP.<sup>517</sup> The suggestion was met with opposition by other EDG Conservative members. Alexander Sherlock (MEP for Essex South West) wrote to Thatcher stating that Scott-Hopkins did not speak for the entire grouping on this matter.<sup>518</sup> The MEPs believed the rejection of the European Parliament budget would damage relations which in turn would make it increasingly difficult to readdress Britain's budgetary problems. Alexander Sherlock's response also shows that Scott-Hopkins did not command the full support of the grouping.

Scott-Hopkins's suggestion to withhold payments reveals a difference between himself and the delegation which led to tensions within the grouping. As a result, Sherlock contacted Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Treasury officials to prepare a report on the consequences of rejecting an EP budget.<sup>519</sup> The report had concluded that even if the budget was rejected the Community would not come to a financial halt due to the 'twelfth regime' which stated that the Community could spend up to one twelfth of the 1980 budget as it saw

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<sup>513</sup> A. May, *Britain and Europe since 1945*, (London: Routledge, 1998), p.70.

<sup>514</sup> J.W. Young, p.147.

<sup>515</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/3/1, Relations between European Conservative Group and the Conservative Parliamentary Party, Westminster, 18 February 1978 – 26 February 1979.

<sup>516</sup> THCR 2/2/3, telephone call summary Scott-Hopkins and MT, 22 December 1979.

<sup>517</sup> TNA, PREM 19/222, Hopkins to MT Correspondence, 1 June 1979.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid, Alexander reaction to Hopkins, 8 June 1979.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid.

fit every month.<sup>520</sup> Additionally, the report suggested that Britain should use this as an opportunity to ensure that less of the budget was focused on agricultural affairs and was instead put towards structural expenditure or regional funds. The matter shows the first-time divisions began to occur between British MEPs for the EDG, and some believe this was partly because of the leadership style of Scott-Hopkins,<sup>521</sup> whose leadership would continue to be a concern heading into the European Parliament presidency election in 1982.

Additionally, because of these problems the Conservative Party at Westminster wanted the Council of Ministers to play a larger role in shaping the Community's budget. This would limit the amount of powers the European Parliament had over the budget, which was arguably the only real power it held. Furthermore, there was limited opposition to the Council gaining powers and the European Parliament losing influence. It was the first time in which little opposition arose from Conservative MEPs on the EP potentially losing powers. Previously, under Kirk's leadership the position was that the European Parliament should be strengthened. However, under Scott-Hopkins, 'the EDG was less resistant to change'.<sup>522</sup> The matter was exacerbated as Conservative members, including Thatcher, wanted to ensure that power resided within the Council. Britain's net contribution to the Community had caused many problems and after the European Council in Dublin, more issues regarding net contributions arose. Lastly, Sherlock's work with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Treasury shows that MEPs could work with these two departments. Moreover, in the future both these departments worked with European Parliament committees to ensure the British government's policy on specific matters were administered.<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>520</sup> G. Cipriani, *Rethinking the EU Budget: Three Unavoidable Reforms*, (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2007), pp.71-88.

<sup>521</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid.

<sup>523</sup> As mentioned in the methodology due the scope of the thesis this will be narrowed down to three European Parliament committees: the Political Affairs Committee, the Rules Committee, and the Budget Committee.

Since Thatcher had become leader of the Conservatives, her view on the way the Community should develop had changed. She and other Conservatives wanted to keep powers within the Council of Ministers, limiting the role of the European Parliament; the Heathite delegation of Conservative MEPs disagreed.<sup>524</sup> Moreover, the death of Kirk led to Scott-Hopkins becoming the grouping's leader and he was less enthusiastic about the Community. Yet Thatcher had communication with the MEPs and supported them on central matters such as salaries. Her views regarding the EP were depicted in 1976 when she suggested that the Conservatives should take a pragmatic approach to the development of the European Parliament, an approach she maintained until 1988. It marked an important moment in the relationship between Thatcher and the MEPs as the two worked together on several issues in her premiership. Thatcher's attitudes towards the European Parliament is important as it contributes to the wider literature surrounding her attitudes towards the Community. As has been noted previously, David Reynolds argues that she was no different to any other European leader and defended British interests.<sup>525</sup> Hugo Young has suggested that Thatcher was like 'an agnostic who still attended church' regarding her views to towards the Community.<sup>526</sup> However, her views towards the European Parliament as seen in this chapter are best seen through John Young's work, who concluded that she was pragmatic in her policy towards Europe (like Harold Wilson).<sup>527</sup> Although John Young and other accounts mentioned do not make specific use of her views towards the European Parliament despite its significance. The European Parliament provided democratic legitimacy to the Community through direct elections and had oversight of the Community budget, which is necessary to consider when examining Conservative attitudes towards the Community in this specific

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<sup>524</sup> THCR 2/2/3, EDG meeting summary, 18 November, 1980.

<sup>525</sup> D. Reynolds, p.267.

<sup>526</sup> H. Young, *This Blessed Plot* (Churchill to Blair), p.185.

<sup>527</sup> J.W. Young, p.136.



period, where the rebate would be a significant aspect of British Conservative European policy.

## Chapter Four: European Developments

Since British accession in 1973 the Community had grown to nine member states. Enlargement encouraged many member states to believe deeper integration would be the future for the Community and believed this could be achieved in two ways. The first was through another round of enlargement; the second through further economic integration between member states. The Community felt this would ease economic tensions throughout Europe. However, the British Conservatives as a whole were ambivalent towards this as they did not wish to see a federalised Community that would take powers away from the British Parliament. The EP had a role in both aspects, and this chapter draws together archival and published sources that can shed light on the Conservative MEPs role in the European Parliament.

### Mediterranean Enlargement

The following section will examine the issues surrounding the potential membership of Greece and Turkey.<sup>528</sup> It will show that despite opposition from member states the European Parliament supported Greek enlargement as MEPs feared the potential of Greece falling into the Soviet Union's orbit.

Enlargement was on the agenda in 1975 as both Greece and Turkey had made enquiries about joining the Community. The European Conservatives and the CDs agreed that both nations could join if the region became more stable, Scott-Hopkins stating that 'it is possible for both countries to eventually join'.<sup>529</sup> This view was shared by the Community as a whole, although the EP did feel it needed to be prepared for enlargement. Because of this the Dutch Socialist C. L. Patijn prepared a report regarding the future of the European Parliament. It envisaged a

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<sup>528</sup> A separate chapter will examine Spanish and Portuguese membership as both of these countries had different concerns to accession, as a result this chapter will only examine Greece and Turkey.

<sup>529</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Plenary Session, 11 October 1975.

larger European Parliament with 355 seats, an increase from the then total of 198 with all members being directly elected.<sup>530</sup> The report had much support, mainly from German and Dutch Socialists in the European Parliament as well as certain Commissioners. Kirk and the EDG likewise supported the report but were less enthusiastic about the 1978 deadline for direct elections.<sup>531</sup> A second report was produced by the Christian Democrat Alfred Bertrand, entitled the Bertrand Report. This outlined the future of the Community suggesting a political union. It stated: 'a single decision-making centre which will be in the nature of a real European government, independent of the national government and responsible to the Parliament of the future.'<sup>532</sup> The report was opposed by the European Conservatives who did not want to develop the Community as quickly as the report suggested. Kirk felt strongly on the matter, specifically because he felt the timing of this report was too premature.<sup>533</sup> The Bertrand Report appeared at the same time as the Socialist grouping had published their own Patijn Report in the run up to direct elections. Due to this, the CDs felt that they had to respond and outline their future for the European Parliament.

Within the European Parliament there was support for Greek accession. However, Harun Arikan has argued that some member states worried about Greece joining. They felt the internal stability of Greece would damage the Community.<sup>534</sup> Eirini Karamouzi's account also suggests that due to the inability of the nine to come to a common position regarding Greek membership, accession was unlikely to occur in the 1970s.<sup>535</sup> The British Labour MEPs took the view that the internal structure of the nine would be compromised. Tam Dalyell, a Scottish Labour MP and a member of the Socialists grouping, warned fellow

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<sup>530</sup> UOP, The European Integration Archive, Patijn Report, 13 January 1975.

<sup>531</sup> See pp.110-113.

<sup>532</sup> A. Bertrand, *European Parliamentary Archive* 'Report on European Union', E.P document, PE 40.930/final, 20 June 1975.

<sup>533</sup> CCA, THRC, 2.6.1.108, Community developments and MEPs report, 8 July 1975.

<sup>534</sup> H. Arikan, *Turkey and the EU: An Awkward Candidate for EU Membership?*, 2nd edition, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2017), p.39.

<sup>535</sup> E. Karmouzi, *Greece, the EEC and the Cold War 1974-1979: The Second Enlargement*, (London: Palgrave, 2014), p.5

European Parliament members that Greece's application should 'not be used to create a two tier European Community' with developed members such as the big four in one tier, and developing smaller countries in another.<sup>536</sup> However, other Socialists disagreed, particularly the German Socialists who felt that membership would help consolidate a young democratic nation like Greece.<sup>537</sup> They believed that the European Parliament could specifically help Greece, and hoped that the Council would consult the European Parliament, and Scott-Hopkins agreed.<sup>538</sup> However, the EDG had mixed views on Greek accession and were ambivalent as a whole. For example, despite Scott-Hopkins's views, Lord Bethel suggested that excessive haste would be incorrect.<sup>539</sup> Others agreed, with Christopher Soames stating in March 1976 that 'we think it right to put some economic water into the somewhat heady political wine'.<sup>540</sup> Yet the work of David Clark suggests this attitude reflected the European Commission's view on the matter as it had taken a pragmatic approach to Greece's application.<sup>541</sup> Greek accession also brought the question of Turkish accession.<sup>542</sup> The European Parliament feared that Greece's application would further exacerbate the Community's 'already stormy relationship' with Turkey.<sup>543</sup> Due to this, the European Parliament motioned for the nine member states to offer better concessions for Turkish farm exports.<sup>544</sup> Furthermore, the Commission's official policy regarding this matter was that both nations were associates of the Community. They believed that both could eventually be members, though the timetable for accession might vary. However, negotiations formally

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<sup>536</sup> UOP, The European Integration Archive, Plenary Session 4 July 1975.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid.

<sup>538</sup> UOP, The European Integration Archive, Parliament in session European Parliament, 5 March 1976.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid. Christopher Soames was the former British Ambassador to France from 1968 to 1972 and the European Commissioner for External Relations from 1973 to 1977. See D. Furby and N.P. Ludlow, Christopher Soames 1968-72, Chapter 6 in: R. Pastor-Castro, J. Young, (eds), *The Paris Embassy: British Ambassadors and Anglo-French Relations 1944-79*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

<sup>541</sup> D. Clark, *The Enlargement and integration of the European Union: Issues and Strategies*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp.45-65.

<sup>542</sup> H. Arkian, p.30.

<sup>543</sup> UOP, The European Integration Archive, Parliament in session European Parliament, 5 March 1976.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid.

began between Greece and the Community in September 1976. The Conservatives displayed ambivalence on the matter of a second Mediterranean enlargement, and the subject also divided the European Parliament.

With Greek accession becoming a larger concern, MEPs became more involved in accession matters, which would increase in future years. But the immediate concern for Britain was the effects that Greek membership would have on its budget contribution which was a highly sensitive topic. British Conservative MEPs expected that as 60 per cent of Greek agricultural output was in fruit, vegetables, and wine it meant Britain's net contribution to the Community would not increase.<sup>545</sup> The Commission agreed, but certain commissioners and MEPs led by Germany and Italy dissented. They calculated that Britain's contribution would increase with Greek accession, and from 1978-79 could increase by over £470 million, which Britain refused to accept.<sup>546</sup> Geoffrey Rippon insisted in the European Parliament that the British Conservatives remained supporters of enlargement. He noted that the Treaty of Rome 'did not envisage a Community limited to six or nine'.<sup>547</sup> However, there were concerns over the growing disparity between the needs of the Southern and Northern European countries. It led to certain Conservatives such as Lord Bruce of Donington urging that the Commission make a bigger effort to hasten the procedure for Greece's eventual accession, as he, like other Conservatives, felt the Community could help secure a democratic future for Greece, and that this could then have a knock-on effect in other Southern European countries.<sup>548</sup> Furthermore, a second round of enlargement would lead to more Community reforms presenting the EDG with an opportunity to push forward European Parliament reforms. Additionally, it could be timely as direct elections would allow the European Parliament to gain more recognition.

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<sup>545</sup> TNA, PREM 16/1264, Steering Brief for London European Council, 5 July 1977. See E. Karmouzi, pp.10-32.

<sup>546</sup> TNA, FCO 28/3248, Parliamentary Select Committee on Expenditure, briefing notes, 13 June 1977.

<sup>547</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary session, 9 June 1977.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid. For more on British attitudes towards Greek Accession see D. Clark, pp.45-65.

Regardless of the potential benefits of enlargement it remained an immense task. The economic and political situation of Greece were very different to that of Britain, Ireland, and Denmark in 1973. The consensus of the Community supported Greek accession. This was because in 1977 the Cold War context was still profoundly important, and Western European nations feared that Southern European countries could potentially become Communist states. Many in the European Parliament even felt that nations such as Greece could learn from the way the European Parliament worked. The episode shows how MEPs had input on significant Community matters such as enlargement, an area where the European Parliament's influence would grow in this period.

### Economic integration

The following section examines the introduction of EMS. The EMS began operating in May 1979 and continued to be a concern despite weaker economies beginning to improve. Scott-Hopkins held reservations, suggesting that if Britain joined it would have had to intervene as Sterling would be hitting the upper band of the EMS, within three weeks of the system starting.<sup>549</sup> Geoffrey Howe, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer, also raised this specific point with Thatcher.<sup>550</sup> This part of the chapter will show that the Conservative MEPs and Thatcher shared a similar view: that Britain should join at a time of economic stability. Through the EMS it can be seen again that on central matters, Thatcher and the MEPs worked effectively with one another.

There were also many economic difficulties which had hampered the development of the Community. Ian Cawood proposes that this was because of the chronic effect of the 1973 oil crisis which was still being felt in 1978.<sup>551</sup> Britain had not hit its growth target and

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<sup>549</sup> TNA, PREM 19/521, Scott-Hopkins and EMS.

<sup>550</sup> Ibid, Chancellor note on EMS, 14 June 1979.

<sup>551</sup> I. Cawood, *Britain in the Twentieth Century*, (London: Routledge, 2005), pp.315-357.

unemployment remained high. Other member states were in a similar position. Moreover, Britain's large budget contribution to the Community provided opponents of integration within the UK opportunities to attack the Community. Austin Mitchell (Labour MP for Grimsby) stated that 'An anti-European feeling was developing rapidly and on a considerable scale'.<sup>552</sup> It also encouraged scrutiny of the functions of the European Parliament, the cost of European elections, and the cost of MEPs. Overall it entailed the depiction of the Community negatively. Furthermore, with the potential accession of Greece, Spain and Portugal there were further economic concerns. Members of the Conservative Party, including figures such as Christopher Soames, were hesitant over Greek accession.<sup>553</sup> Roy Jenkins also feared that accession of three more countries would potentially weaken the Community. The economic data had shown the Community's trade growth decreasing from an average of nine per cent per annum to two per cent in 1977 which Jenkins suggested was caused by the oil crisis of 1973.<sup>554</sup> The situation was exacerbated as other countries rebounded from the crisis quicker than the Community, particularly the US and Japan. The US dollar was at the time the only effective medium of international trade which greatly impacted the European currencies along with intra-Community relationships. Jenkins argued that the dollar having withdrawn from its responsibilities under Bretton Woods was 'like a legion without central command'.<sup>555</sup> The Conservative delegation led by Rippon wanted the Community to act. MEPs felt that further integration might be necessary since the Bretton Woods system had collapsed in 1971,<sup>556</sup> which brought to the forefront the idea of the European Monetary System (EMS). The EMS was meant to establish an area of economic stability for member states by preventing large fluctuations in exchange rates. In Cobham and Zis's account, they

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<sup>552</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 987 cc1543-698, 2 July 1980.

<sup>553</sup> TNA, PREM 16/1264, European Commission note on enlargement, 17 April 1977.

<sup>554</sup> European Council Archive: Jenkins memo for Copenhagen European Council, 19 June 1978.

<sup>555</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>556</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliamentary Plenary Session, 7 February 1978.

suggest it was also an attempt to deepen economic integration.<sup>557</sup> Eirini Karamouzi even argues that 'the genesis of the European Monetary System (EMS) came to be linked with enlargement'.<sup>558</sup> Regardless, the EMS would ensure that the Community would be more prepared for economic difficulties in the future, drawing on lessons learnt from the OPEC oil crisis.

Jenkins and the EDG held divergent views on how the Community should address economic issues. The EDG wanted to develop a common economic policy to tackle problems, as illustrated in the Blumenfeld Report.<sup>559</sup> This suggested that 'links between the Foreign Ministers of the Nine and the European Parliament must be improved and strengthened'. The Blumenfeld Report is also an example of how the EDG was able to work with other MEPs, as it was a revised version of the Bertrand Report, which as seen previously, was opposed by the EDG. Moreover, Thatcher emphasised that a coordinated effort was required, stating that 'the joint declarations issued by Foreign Ministers and heads of government certainly have their significance, but what really matters is joint efforts to translate words into deeds. If Europe speaks with many voices her views will be lost.'<sup>560</sup> The statement again shows that Thatcher and the Conservative MEPs were in agreement. The statement was also supported by most of the European Parliament who, as did the EDG, argued that action needed to be taken urgently.<sup>561</sup> They believed that with direct elections approaching and more scrutiny being placed on the Community the issue should be resolved.

Jenkins however, wanted instead to develop the European unit of account. This could be used to settle internal exchange rate matters and ensure that the economic 'snake' system worked correctly. Yet Piers Ludlow argues that Jenkins remained hesitant of the scheme due to its

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<sup>557</sup> D. Cobham and G. Zis, eds, *From EMS to EMU: 1979 to 1999 and Beyond*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp.43-66.

<sup>558</sup> E. Karamouzi, p.117.

<sup>559</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Blumenfeld report, 4 December 1977.

<sup>560</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliamentary Plenary Session, 6 January 1978.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid.



cost ‘which had been most clearly spelled out’.<sup>562</sup> This was despite the European unit potentially preventing deeper integration, which would appease Labour and Conservative Eurosceptics, but could also ease the economic strain on the Community.<sup>563</sup> The matter was decided at the Copenhagen European Council Summit, again highlighting the importance of these summits. The subject dominated proceedings, not only because of the situation in Europe, but also because a Western Economic Summit was set to occur in 1978.

At the Council meeting it was decided that over a three-month period a common economic policy would be developed.<sup>564</sup> The main objective of the EMS was to create a ‘zone of monetary stability’.<sup>565</sup> EMS did, however, have characteristics of the Bretton Woods monetary system. The EMS involved a fixed exchange rate that could be adjusted accordingly. EMS also included a European Currency Unit (ECU) in which each member state had a central currency rate determined by the ECU. These central rates would then determine the upper and lower bands of the ERM. It would then be the duty of member states’ central banks to ensure their currencies stayed within these bands, replacing the European ‘snake’ mechanism.<sup>566</sup> Prior to the European Council meeting, over a three-month period French President Giscard d’Estaing and German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt had held bilateral discussions to develop an EMS. Callaghan was not involved and felt that the UK was being alienated regarding economic integration.<sup>567</sup> Both Conservative and Labour members were concerned, as they wanted certain conditions for an EMS. For example, they wanted a level and fair contribution to be made by poorer member states as well as more developed ones. They also wanted to ensure that adequate financial support mechanisms were

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<sup>562</sup> P. Ludlow, *Roy Jenkins and the European Commission Presidency, 1976–1980*, (London: Palgrave, 2016), p.137.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid.

<sup>564</sup> European Council Archive: Copenhagen European Council, 8 April 1978.

<sup>565</sup> See European Council Archive, Commission of the ECs, *European Economy*, no. 2 (5 March 1979): 7-10; and no. 3, 63-91, (July 1979).

<sup>566</sup> See H. Thompson, *The British Conservative Government and the ERM 1979-1994*, (London: Palgrave, 1999).

<sup>567</sup> TNA, PREM 19/521, EMS and European Council Summit preparation, 10 January 1979.

in place for both short- and medium-term credit.<sup>568</sup> This demonstrates that the Conservatives were open to the idea of deeper integration but cautious about EMS. Regarding EMS, tensions began to rise as Britain felt side-lined by Franco-German relations. It was decided that Britain would not fully participate in EMS, although sterling would be in the basket of currencies that formed the ECU. This was a tactic that would later be used in the Maastricht negotiations.<sup>569</sup> Britain had not joined the EMS because of the objections of Callaghan, and Alex Wright argues that his scepticism stemmed from seeing the failure of the ‘snake’ in previous years.<sup>570</sup> Yet Alex May has suggested that Callaghan sought concessions because of the internal disputes regarding the Community in the Labour Party.<sup>571</sup> The EDG differed in their views on this development as they, like Thatcher, were also hesitant over the EMS. Yet some MEPs wished to join, the grouping as a whole wanted integration to occur more slowly.<sup>572</sup> The Conservative MEPs, again, were a group within the Conservative Party whose views have not been fully explored in the literature regarding Britain and the EMS.

There were other problems that the EMS presented to Britain. For the Conservative Party, namely that Britain would have constraints on the ability to manage its own exchange rate. The EMS also suggested that economic integration could potentially lead to further political integration. The Conservative government believed that the EMS could eventually align domestic economic policies of member states.<sup>573</sup> Hence EMS was widely viewed as a tool for further integration which the Conservatives approached with caution. Furthermore, joining the EMS would require a change to be made in the way the Conservative government was using monetary policy to tackle inflation. Howe stated that the EMS ‘put the cart before the

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<sup>568</sup> Ibid.

<sup>569</sup> See section four.

<sup>570</sup> D. Gowland, J. Turner, and A. Wright, p.79.

<sup>571</sup> A. May, *Britain and Europe since 1945*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), p.65.

<sup>572</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>573</sup> Ibid.

horse'.<sup>574</sup> He suggested a case could be made for member states to individually resolve their economies before committing to EMS, which had not been proven. Moreover, as observed by Cobham and Zis, the EMS 'was a threat to America whether it successfully survived or spectacularly failed'.<sup>575</sup> Thus Britain fully supporting the EMS could have potentially affected its relationship with the USA. Thus, it can be seen that there were many reasons to oppose the EMS which also caused some Conservative MEPs to be split on the matter.

There were however, many potential benefits of joining the EMS. First, there were economic benefits that could be amplified if Britain joined, as it gave the British government the ability to choose the starting rate in the EMS. Additionally, EMS was not a rigid fixed exchange rate system hence Britain would not lose complete control over exchange rate policies. This was an argument used by some MEPs, including members of the EDG.<sup>576</sup> Joining the EMS also had certain political advantages, Howe suggesting that it would be a 'firm indication that we are breaking from the past'.<sup>577</sup> Again, some Conservative MEPs felt this could improve relations with the Community. Scott-Hopkins believed Britain should join under stable economic conditions and that joining should be exploited to its fullest.<sup>578</sup> He and others wanted to use joining the EMS as a tool to ensure Britain's contribution to the Community was lowered. It would also assist in developing the MEPs' relations with other groupings. France, however, remained hesitant over Britain joining the EMS, as Sterling would be a strong currency. In turn, this would have a large impact on the Franc, weakening the position of France in matters of the EMS.<sup>579</sup> It can be clearly seen that there were many obstacles for the EMS, since it started in June 1979 Britain's attitude was that they should join the EMS in a period of economic stability.

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<sup>574</sup> Ibid.

<sup>575</sup> D. Cobham and G. Zis, p.57.

<sup>576</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 11 July 1978.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid.

<sup>578</sup> THCR, 2.1.2.9, Thatcher Correspondence with Scott-Hopkins, 3 December 1978.

<sup>579</sup> Ibid.

Another immediate issue was the question of whether Britain should swap some of the UK's reserves for European Currency Units (ECU). In 1979 Britain's attitudes towards these matters were addressed at the European Council meeting in Strasbourg. Thatcher announced that Britain would deposit some of its dollar and gold reserves in the European Cooperation Fund in exchange for ECUs.<sup>580</sup> She also stated that Britain would reconsider its position on the EMS after a review in September, proposing that Britain would contribute to certain aspects of the EMS.<sup>581</sup> Britain's aim in 1979 under Thatcher was to join the EMS, but in a period of economic stability. Her views again reiterated that she was willing to be more cooperative in the Community than the Labour Party. The matter also demonstrates that Thatcher and the British Conservative MEPs as whole worked together on the EMS as they both shared a similar view.

Overall, the death of Kirk and the eventual leadership Scott-Hopkins was critical as it would shape the British Conservative approach in the European Parliament and the wider Community. Direct elections had also played a part in developing the relationship between the EPP and the European Conservatives. However, the largest factor for overall deeper integration which encompassed enlargement, closer relations with groupings, and the EMS was within the context of the Cold War: Europe still had to secure its own future. The importance of the Cold War in Community developments is discussed in the work of Steve Marsh and Wyn Rees.<sup>582</sup> Additionally, Andrew Moravcsik has also argued that the economic difficulties in Europe illustrated the weakness of the Community during this period.<sup>583</sup> However, neither account discusses the views of MEPs. This chapter has shown how some MEPs believed the Community's difficulties could be overcome through deeper integration, which the EMS represented. British Conservative MEPs wanted deeper integration but more

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<sup>580</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Council meeting, 22 June 1979.

<sup>581</sup> TNA, PREM 19/51, UK Rep Brussels to FCO summary of Strasbourg European Council, 27 June 1979.

<sup>582</sup> S. Marsh and W. Rees, *The European Union in the Security of Europe*, (London: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>583</sup> A. Moravcsik, *European Union and World Politics* (London: Routledge 2006), pp.220-240.

slowly to ensure public opinion followed, a view shared by Conservatives at Westminster; again, demonstrating that Thatcher and the Conservative MEPs in the mid to late 1970s agreed on central matters such as Greek enlargement and the EMS.

## 1970s Conclusion

Overall, the 1970s demonstrated developments in the Community and the contribution made by the Conservative MEPs. The Conservative delegation started their tenure in the European Parliament strongly as they were instrumental in introducing the new question time procedure in 1973. They wished to make the European Parliament a more efficient institution, as seen in section one. Furthermore, the new question time provided the European Parliament with informal influence in the overall decision-making process of the Community. Corbett and Shackleton argue it provided ‘opportunity to obtain precise information on particular points or to force a policy statement to be made’ by the Commission.<sup>584</sup> Caroline Jackson suggests that ‘the British popular press [saw it] as a victory for Westminster procedures’.<sup>585</sup> Section one adds to these debates by highlighting the role of the British Conservative MEPs in introducing this process through their memorandum tabled in 1973. Moreover, the introduction of question time as seen in section one allowed MEPs to debate freely with Commissioners which led to better relations between the two. The new question time also shows that Conservative MEPs shared a similar view to Heath at the time as they wanted to legitimise the European Parliament.

The Conservative MEPs as seen in chapter one were able to form their own grouping which gave the MEPs an opportunity to provide a distinct British contribution to the EP particularly with Britain joining the Community late in 1973. The accounts of Nelsen and Guth as well as Heuser and Buffet suggest that due to religion, the CDs were unwilling to accept British Conservative MEPs.<sup>586</sup> Yet the relationship between the British Conservatives and the EPP

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<sup>584</sup> R. Corbett., F.Jacobs., M.,Shackleton, *The European Parliament*, (London, Catermill, 1999), p.277.

<sup>585</sup> C. Jackson, ‘The First British MEPs: Styles and Strategies’, *Contemporary European History*, 2.2 (1993), 169-95.

<sup>586</sup> See F. Nelsen and J. Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union*, and B. Heuser and C. Buffet, eds, *Haunted by History: Myths in International Relations*, (Oxford: Berghahn, 1998).

was lukewarm not only for religious reasons but because the EPP believed the original Conservative delegation should have sat with them immediately in 1973.<sup>587</sup> Moreover, on a personal level the senior figures of the two groupings had many differences. Kirk felt that British Conservatives viewed Conservatism differently to the CDs members. Furthermore, they had concerns regarding the manner and speed in which the Community should develop, which was reflected in the Bertrand Report which the European Democratic Grouping (EDG) opposed, as seen in section one.<sup>588</sup> These concerns about the report was not examined in other works as the sources were not available to many at the time; hence an original contribution is made regarding these reports. The differences in the reports add more to the literature regarding the relationship of the EPP and EDG.<sup>589</sup> The differences between the two groupings led to difficulties as the EDG could not push through its policies when votes from other groupings were required, since the EDG was a small group. The size of the grouping made the job of Conservative MEPs difficult as they spent much of their time building relations. In his account, William Riker has more broadly discussed small groupings within the European Parliament, and proposes that through bartering votes in one area smaller groupings could gain support in another area: he refers to this as the ‘minimum-winning’ tactic.<sup>590</sup> Additionally, Bernard Steunenberg describes the creation of smaller groupings in the European Parliament as a ‘costly move’ although his account examines the Italian Communist grouping created in 1989.<sup>591</sup> Section one has shown the struggles that a small grouping, specifically the EDG, faced in getting support, as seen regarding the motion to censure the European Commission in 1976 and the issue of company mergers.

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<sup>587</sup> Known as the Christian Democrats until 1976.

<sup>588</sup> Known as the European Conservatives until 1979.

<sup>589</sup> See Nelsen and Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union*. (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2015)., or, B. Heuser and C. Buffet. eds, *Haunted by History: Myths in International Relations* (Oxford: Berghahn, 1998).

<sup>590</sup> W. Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions*, (New Haven: Yale University Press 1962). However, ‘minimum-winning’ became more apparent in the 1980s for the EDG as will be discussed in section three.

<sup>591</sup> B. Steunenberg, ed., *Widening the European Union: Politics of Institutional Change and Reform*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), p.213.

The most significant development regarding the European Parliament throughout the 1970s was the advent of direct elections. Juliet Lodge has suggested these would ‘erase the Community’s democratic deficit’.<sup>592</sup> Richard Corbett also explains how many felt that the European Parliament’s powers would increase after direct elections.<sup>593</sup> Nicholas Crowson discusses the attitudes of Conservative MPs who feared the loss of parliamentary sovereignty to the European Parliament if direct elections occurred.<sup>594</sup> Section one, however, through using more archival material, shows that many, including Peter Kirk, felt that the powers of the European Parliament would increase after direct elections. The section however ultimately showed that elections were led by other Community institutions and national governments ahead of the European Parliament demonstrating the limited influence the European Parliament had in this earlier period which would differ greatly in the 1980s onwards.

However, there were failures regarding direct elections that damaged the European Parliament’s credibility, and much has been written on the topic. Follesdal and Hix argue that direct elections did not reduce the democratic deficit within the Community as the powers of the European Parliament remained limited.<sup>595</sup> Richard Corbett has suggests that the lack of interest shown by the British public damaged the European Parliament.<sup>596</sup> Furthermore, David Gowland suggests that ‘the episode further strengthened the image of Britain as a recalcitrant member state’.<sup>597</sup> Section one shows that the date for elections was repeatedly moved back illustrating a lack of coordination between member states and the cumbersome decision-making process within the Community. It also damaged the credibility of the

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<sup>592</sup> J. Lodge and V. Herman, p.77.

<sup>593</sup> R. Corbett, *The European Parliament's Role in Closer EU Integration*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 294.

<sup>594</sup> N.J. Crowson, *The Conservative Party and European Integration since 1945: At the Heart of Europe?*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p.46.

<sup>595</sup> A. Follesdal and S. Hix, Why There is a Democratic Deficit in the EU, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44.3, (2006), pp.533-62.

<sup>596</sup> R. Corbett, p.297.

<sup>597</sup> D. Gowland, *Britain and the European Union*, (New York: Routledge, 2017), p.91.



European Parliament. Moreover, turnout for Britain in the European Elections was a mere 33 per cent. Franklin and Hobolt have explained that low turnout damaged the legitimacy of the European Parliament in Britain, which had a lasting effect on subsequent European Elections as turnout remained low.<sup>598</sup> The low turnout was attributed to the fact that the public felt that issues such as industrial relations and unemployment were best dealt with by Westminster rather than the European Parliament. Section one showed low turnout in direct elections also marked a significant moment in the relationship between the European Parliament and Britain because it showed a disconnection between the public and MEPs. It meant that the public would look more towards Westminster than towards MEPs to press European policy. The Conservatives, however, had some success in these elections which reflected the results of the general election in 1979.

Section two showed that domestically, the MEP's role was scrutinised specifically regarding the balance between the costs and benefits. Nicholas Crowson has suggested that parliamentary sovereignty was a concern for MPs.<sup>599</sup> In contrast, Anthony Forster has shown that opposition, specifically regarding the European Parliament, arose more from the Labour Party.<sup>600</sup> As seen in section two, even after the referendum, Labour MEPs could be a counter-balance to the European Parliament and prevent its federalist agenda. Section two showed how the Conservative Party as a whole was less hostile towards MEPs, particularly regarding their salaries. These were a very sensitive topic on which Thatcher supported Conservative MEPs, a matter not discussed in Forster's examination of the EP. The salary increase was supported by the Conservative Party ultimately as they had developed a better understanding of the advantages of MEPs and the role, they played in Community decision-making, particularly in campaigning and the support they provided in administering European policy.

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<sup>598</sup> M. Franklin and S. Hobolt in J. Richardson, and S. Mazey, ed., *European Union: Power and Policy-making* (New York: Routledge 2006), pp.390-402.

<sup>599</sup> Crowson, p.46.

<sup>600</sup> A. Forster, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p.52.

It was demonstrated in 1975 when Lord O'Hagan was pivotal in ensuring the Community provided funds for the Yes campaign, and many MEPs, such as Henry Plumb and Scott-Hopkins, campaigned across the country for Britain's continued membership. Moreover, unlike Labour, Conservative MEPs had some successes in the European Parliament as seen by the introduction of a question time.

Both sections have touched on the relationship between the Conservative leadership and the MEP delegation. Section one showed that Heath had chosen a delegation, many of whom, such as Peter Kirk, had strong relations with him. Moreover, both sections argued that despite the burden of the dual mandate many MEPs were able to have clear communications with Westminster and Whitehall departments. This continued to be the case when Thatcher became leader of the Conservative Party. Thus, overall in this period the MEPs and the Conservative leadership were able to effectively work together.

Nonetheless, both sections have demonstrated the hostility some MPs showed towards MEPs in House of Commons debates and, as a consequence, some MEPs became disillusioned with Westminster over the course of the 1970s. Much has been written on Thatcher's attitudes towards the Community in this early period of British membership. John Young has drawn comparisons between Thatcher and Wilson suggesting that she took a pragmatic view on the Community.<sup>601</sup> Richard Vinen has commented that Thatcher consistently supported membership of the Community,<sup>602</sup> while John Turner observed that Thatcher came into power at the time of the referendum and thus had little time to outline her European policy.<sup>603</sup> Seldon and Collings also suggest that Thatcher had to maintain party unity, even in the document *The Right Approach*, noting that she 'had to move stealthily, coaxing and cajoling

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<sup>601</sup> J. W. Young, *Britain and European Unity 1945–92*, (New York, Macmillan, 1992), p.136.

<sup>602</sup> R. Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era*, (London, Pocket Books, 2009), p.81.

<sup>603</sup> A. Turner, *The Tories and Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp.41-76.

her shadow cabinet behind her'.<sup>604</sup> Section one and two have added to these debates, by offering a much more granular and empirically rich case study of Thatcher's attitudes, specifically towards the European Parliament and the Conservative MEPs. As seen in section two, she was willing to take a pragmatic view on the European Parliament's development. Moreover, she held strong working relations with the MEP delegation and supported them on central matters including that of salary increases. Thatcher and the MEPs even held a similar position on many issues such as the EMS and Greek accession. The two sections show Thatcher's pragmatic approach to the European Parliament which should be considered when assessing her overall policy towards the Community. Thatcher was, however, assisted by many MEPs holding dual mandates which made it easier to communicate with the MEP delegation. Yet communication between MEPs and MPs would become increasingly difficult in the following decade as the dual mandate norm declined after direct elections were instigated.

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<sup>604</sup> A. Seldon, D. Collings, *Britain Under Thatcher*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), p.5.

## **Section Three: The Conservative Party and the Community: 1980-85**

The period of 1980-85 was dominated by the debate surrounding Britain's budget contribution to the Community and reform of the CAP. Both these matters were fundamental to Thatcher's overall European policy. The matter culminated in 1984 when Britain began to receive a rebate from the Community, although the CAP remained untouched despite the efforts of the Conservative government and the MEPs working in committees. Additionally, the newly elected European Parliament worked hard to gain new powers. It became clear in this period that the committees 'were the engine room of the Parliament'.<sup>605</sup> The Rules Committee was important and Conservative MEPs contributed greatly to the development of the European Parliament. Christopher Prout, Amédée Turner, and Ben Patterson all assisted in this through utilising the European Parliament's power to delay decision making. The section will also demonstrate how some MEPs, such as Christopher Prout, Diane Elles, Henry Plumb, Scott-Hopkins and Christopher Jackson were able to build strong relations with MPs and Whitehall departments.

1980-85 was a turbulent time for the Conservative MEPs as Scott-Hopkins was replaced by Henry Plumb as leader of the EDG and head of the British Conservatives in 1982. Furthermore, in 1982 Scott-Hopkins and the grouping had supported the election of the Socialist Pieter Dankert to be the European Parliament President ahead of Egon Klepsch of the EPP. The episode had a long-lasting impact on the relationship between the British Conservatives and the EPP. Klepsch was disliked by the grouping, which shows that the division between the EPP and EDG arose from significant moments such as the 1982 European Parliament Presidency election or the decision to sit independently as a grouping in

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<sup>605</sup> Author interview with Anthony Teasdale, 20 January 2017.

1973. The change in leadership was a traumatic moment for the grouping as Scott-Hopkins was ousted due to the outcome of the European Parliament Presidency election. Plumb came from a farming background and held strong relations with EPP members.<sup>606</sup> Yet Conservative MEPs worked closely with the Conservative government in this period on various matters ranging from European Parliament reports on Northern Ireland and the Falklands, to defining the mechanism used to pay Britain's rebate. The rebate will demonstrate the role Conservative MEPs played alongside Thatcher, and was an example where Thatcher made efforts to work with the MEPs. However, the array of concerns surrounding the European Parliament, which included direct elections and the cost of MEPs, meant that the incident of the Northern Ireland report in 1983 damaged the relationship between the MEPs and the Conservative government. Some MEPs began to become increasingly disillusioned with Westminster. MEPs discussed how frustrated they were in the lack of understanding by the public regarding the sheer workload and the strain being a MEP put on their personal relationships.<sup>607</sup> However as will be seen, Thatcher continued to work with the MEPs, and some held strong relationships with her.

Lastly, Greece formally joined the Community in 1981 increasing the total number of MEPs from 410 to 434. Negotiations for further Mediterranean enlargement also took place with Spain and Portugal. Due to the 1979 direct elections, the European Parliament was better equipped to manage enlargement. However, it felt that its powers should increase with many believing the Council of Ministers and Commission had too much influence in the Community, a view shared by EDG members. A problem for the EDG, however, remained the size and lack of diversity in its grouping. As a result, throughout this period it had to rely on relationships with other groupings to have a say in the European Parliament. Members of

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<sup>606</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/2/3, European Democratic Group Bureau Meetings, 7 January 1981.

<sup>607</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

the EDG even contemplated joining the EPP unless it was able to attract MEPs from Mediterranean states.

## Chapter Five: EDG in the European Parliament

The following chapter will discuss significant events that shaped the EDG, namely the European Parliament presidency of 1982 and how this had a long-lasting effect on its relationship with the EPP, as was the ousting of Scott-Hopkins as leader. It will also examine the impact of the Northern Ireland report, which was a key moment for the relationship between MEPs and MPs. The Northern Ireland report will show that MPs and MEPs were able effectively to work together despite the meeting at Number Ten which led to some MEPs falling out with Thatcher. Lastly, it will analyse the early ideas of Delors in his presidency and the EMS.

Conservative MEPs were left frustrated as they struggled to build relationships in the European Parliament. The size of the EDG was becoming a concern, a legacy of the decision taken to sit alone in 1973 as seen in section one. Moreover, as also seen in section one, major decisions were led by governments or other Community institutions. As a result, Thatcher and her advisors were concerned for MEPs and commissioned a report on their morale.<sup>608</sup> It again demonstrates that Thatcher and her senior advisors thought it was best to engage with the MEPs and to be kept abreast of developments within the delegation. This was because the MEPs were still a valuable resource in providing insights into the workings of the Community as many worked on multiple European Parliament committees and held relations with European Commissioners. Thatcher and her advisors understood that if they wanted to secure a rebate on Community contributions the European Parliament and MEPs would play a significant role.<sup>609</sup> In November 1980, Robert Jackson (MEP for Upper Thames) wrote a report on the state of British Conservative MEPs, and his findings suggested that out of the

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<sup>608</sup> CCA, THCR 2.11.12.1 part 1 f20, Robert Jackson report on MEP morale, 6 November 1980.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid, Thatcher letter to Scott-Hopkins, 19 November 1980.

30 hardest working MEPs, seventeen were British Conservative.<sup>610</sup> Jackson went on to argue that it would eventually lead to some MEPs becoming disillusioned with both the Conservative Party and the European Parliament.<sup>611</sup> The report highlighted the sheer amount of work MEPs had, as this covered constituency work, work in the European Parliament and, for some, their responsibilities as an MP. Yet certain MPs still undermined them, such as Tony Marlow (Conservative MP for Northampton), who stated that MEPs needed to ‘justify the glory of their own lame institution’.<sup>612</sup> However, Jackson’s report had shown that MEPs did not have a clear direction from the Conservative Party on what goals they should pursue in the European Parliament.<sup>613</sup> Hence, if membership of the Community turned out to be a failure, the MEPs’ morale would be further damaged. The report urged for clear communication between the two Parliaments.<sup>614</sup> Whilst the lack of direction by the Conservative Party encouraged MEPs to act more autonomously. By commissioning this report, Thatcher and her advisors showed interest in the Conservative delegation. Thatcher was interested in the MEPs because, being elected Conservative officials, they could create internal divisions within the party. Moreover, she understood that the MEPs could also be utilised to carry out her wider European policies and provide insights into the workings of the Community as many worked on multiple European Parliament committees and held relations with European Commissioners.<sup>615</sup> Hence Thatcher and her senior advisors took the decision to consistently engage with the Conservative MEPs as seen in the previous two sections and began 1980 by continuing this through the commissioning of the report on MEP morale.

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<sup>610</sup> Ibid.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid.

<sup>612</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 1 cc206-1217, 15 March 1981.

<sup>613</sup> CCA, THCR 2.11.12.1 part 1 f20, Robert Jackson report on MEP morale, 4 November 1980.

<sup>614</sup> Ibid.

<sup>615</sup> As will be seen in the rebate in the following chapter.



There was also an issue over the leadership of the Conservative MEPs. Scott-Hopkins was to be challenged by Frederick Warner (MEP for Somerset).<sup>616</sup> Warner had been an ambassador to Japan under Heath and was elected a MEP in 1979. However, Scott-Hopkins had been selected as the leader by Thatcher. The Conservative Research Department advised Thatcher that the leadership of the British Conservative delegation of MEPs should be decided by the party leader.<sup>617</sup> Personally Thatcher was open to Scott-Hopkins to stand again. This, however, led to complaints from the EDG, who wanted MEPs to vote for their own leader.<sup>618</sup> Moreover, the leader of the EDG did not necessarily need to be the leader of the British Conservative delegation as it was still a multinational grouping consisting of 60 British MEPs, three Danish MEPS, and one Ulster Unionist MEP. Thus, the MEPs felt that MPs were undermining them, even after direct elections had given them democratic legitimacy. The leadership matter marked the first real divide between the Conservative MPs and the Conservative MEPs. This divide was an effect of direct elections as many MEPs no longer had a dual mandate, worsening communication between the two Parliaments. Moreover, with direct elections and MEPs belonging to a multinational grouping, they were an elected independent bloc. Scott-Hopkins's leadership had been questioned as he failed to have the full confidence of the grouping on key matters such as the rebate.<sup>619</sup> His leadership would be placed under increasing pressure until 1982 when he was replaced by Henry Plumb.

Due to the report on morale steps were taken to improve lines of communication between MEPs and MPs. James Spicer (MEP for Wessex) was central to this plan. Spicer had held a dual mandate since 1979 and was also the chief whip of the EDG. It was decided that his responsibility at Westminster was to liaise between the chief whip's office in London and

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<sup>616</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>617</sup> Bodleian Library CRD 4/22/33, European Parliament: EDG leadership, 21 August 1980.

<sup>618</sup> CCA, CATH 243, Papers of Fredrick Catherwood, 4 June 1980. The majority of these MEPs were younger consisting of Peter Price, Michael Welsh and Jack-Stewart Clarke.

<sup>619</sup> An example of this was seen with Alexander Sherlock's strong disagreement with Scott-Hopkins on withholding Britain's contribution seen in the previous section 'The Conservative Party Leadership and the European Parliament'. p.120.

Strasbourg to ensure clear communication between the two Parliaments.<sup>620</sup> Yet one year into his role he had begun to dislike this position. He felt it was an ineffective post as there were still problems regarding communication between MEPs and MPs, which led to confusion on both fronts.<sup>621</sup> Spicer proposed that the two whips' offices deal with each other directly, which would be a more efficient way of liaising. He also asked Scott-Hopkins if he could be 'phased out' of his role.<sup>622</sup> In 1981 Scott-Hopkins agreed to this course of action. Communication between the two Parliaments was an issue throughout this period and some argued it was worsened by the civil service. Some MEPs argued that civil servants failed to see where MEPs fitted into the government machinery. They felt that even the civil servants that did work with them saw MEPs as an extension of the government and thought they should pursue the government's European agenda.<sup>623</sup> However, as will be shown later, the civil servants did show an interest in European Parliament committees specifically. As a result, certain MEPs were able to build relationships with Whitehall departments.<sup>624</sup> The work of Spicer again shows the issue of communication between the two Parliaments. Yet Spicer's position also shows that the Thatcher government tried to immediately remedy the concern over communication and were thus fully aware of the problems it could create. It again supports the view that Thatcher wished to have an effective relationship with the MEPs. Although because of poor communication and some Conservative MPs being traditionally hostile towards the MEPs, led to some MEPs acting more autonomously and were seen as a Heathite wing of the party.

However, James Spicer still wanted to play a role in the party regarding the Community. He believed that major opposition towards the Community would continue in the House of

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<sup>620</sup> CCA, THCR 2.11.12.1, Gow letter to Jim Spicer MEP, 23 October 1980.

<sup>621</sup> Ibid.

<sup>622</sup> Ibid.

<sup>623</sup> Author interview Anthony Teasdale, 17 March 2017.

<sup>624</sup> Three MEPs were able to build strong relations with Whitehall departments due to their committee work. These MEPs were Diane Elles (Political Affairs Committee), Christopher Jackson (Budget Committee) and Christopher Prout (Rules Committee). They will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Commons.<sup>625</sup> Spicer had a vast amount of European experience as he had been the party's director for the group on Europe and subsequently served as the group's chairman. He had also been an important MP for Edward Heath as he campaigned widely in the south of England for EEC membership in 1970 and 1971.<sup>626</sup> Spicer is an example of how some Conservative MEPs were still former Heathites with strong pro-European inclinations. Like other Conservative MEPs, he wanted the European Parliament to be a success. Yet this view caused friction with the Westminster Parliament who did not support the European Parliament and 'the distinct aroma of federalism' it carried.<sup>627</sup> They instead saw the Council of Ministers as the most effective Community institution.

Despite the issues of direct elections being resolved by 1979 there were still matters that the Conservative Party were forced to address. One of these regarded the electoral system used by member states. The Treaty of Rome stated that European elections for the Community should be carried out under a uniform system.<sup>628</sup> However, Britain opted to use the FPTP system while other states chose to use PR. In 1981 this issue arose again as the European Parliament's Political Affairs Committee suggested that it might adopt a report on the uniform electoral process for direct elections making all member states conduct elections under PR.<sup>629</sup> The EDG was, in principle, supportive, but they wanted to maintain some form of FPTP in the election of seats. They wanted 75 per cent of seats to be determined by PR and 25 per cent by FPTP.<sup>630</sup> Conservative MEP Alan Tyrrell highlighted the advantages of PR arguing that it would prevent big swings in European elections, which would otherwise have a high probability of occurring.<sup>631</sup> Low turnout coupled with the divide between rural and city

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<sup>625</sup> CCA, THCR 2.11.12.1, Gow letter to Jim Spicer MEP, 23 October 1980.

<sup>626</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/35, European Parliament, James Gow and Dual Mandate, 19 July 1981.

<sup>627</sup> *Hansard*, Raphael Tuck, HC Deb vol 902 cc1383-8, 17 December 1975.

<sup>628</sup> See section one, Direct Elections, for more details.

<sup>629</sup> CCA, THCR 2.11.12.2, Bickham letter to Gow: EDG views on proposed European Parliament electoral reform, 21 May 1981.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>631</sup> *Ibid.*

constituencies made this possible. There was, however, opposition within the EDG: Danish members had traditionally opposed PR, as did other MEPs such as Eric Forth (a member of the H-bloc) who argued that PR would provoke a negative reaction from the British public. He felt that if the EDG supported the proposal it would be interpreted as a 'precedent for PR upon which the liberals/SDP alliance could build'.<sup>632</sup> His suggestion was loosely supported by other MEPs such as William Hopper.<sup>633</sup> Scott-Hopkins supported the idea of PR but suggested that a decision had to be reached swiftly as the proposal still had to go before the Council, which would delay the outcome.<sup>634</sup> Thus, for these reasons, the EDG accepted the proposal. The debate around the system of voting shows the division within the EDG. Moreover, there is little archival evidence to show that government departments engaged with the MEPs on the matter as they would on other issues like Northern Ireland.

Thatcher and the Minister for Europe Douglas Hurd accepted PR as it prevented a potential rift being created between Conservative MEPs and MPs.<sup>635</sup> It also illustrates consistency in the wider Conservative policy towards the Community, which was to be accepting and non-confrontational on matters that were not central to their overall European policy. The proposal would have limited impact on Westminster as it was a procedural matter for the European Parliament to decide. Again, this demonstrates that the EP was not an integral part of the Conservative government's European policy. Yet direct elections and PR were very significant as they meant that smaller parties could gain seats in the EP providing them with a platform to build upon, pushing them into national parliaments. Moreover, it shows internal divisions within the EDG, which would continue to occur as the size of the grouping was larger than it had been prior to direct elections.

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<sup>632</sup> Ibid.

<sup>633</sup> Ibid. Bickham report, benefits of PR, 18 June 1981.

<sup>634</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/2/3, European Democratic Group Bureau Meetings, 7 January 1981.

<sup>635</sup> Ibid. Thatcher letter to Scott-Hopkins, 15 March 1981.

Another internal matter for the EDG in 1981 regarded the grouping's leadership, which coincided with the 1982 election for the presidency of the European Parliament. These matters were linked as Scott-Hopkins wanted to be a candidate for the EP presidency as well as to be re-elected EDG chairman. He had some support from the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Lord Carrington, who did, however, emphasise that the government should remain neutral on the presidential candidacy as to not impact relations with other member states.<sup>636</sup> However, it was highly unlikely that Scott-Hopkins would win the European Parliament presidency as he would be unable to win votes from the other centre-right groupings. Egon Klepsch, a German member of the EPP, was also running for presidency and had the support of the EPP and most of the Liberal grouping, giving him 170 potential votes. If the EDG members all voted for Scott-Hopkins this would amount to a mere 64 votes. Moreover, there was a fear that EDG members would vote for the Dutch MEP Pieter Dankert who was favourite to win the presidency.<sup>637</sup> Corbett, Jacobs and Shackleton comment that the 1982 election was 'dramatic' due to the division of the right-wing groupings.<sup>638</sup> They also suggest that the EDG were 'personally unenthusiastic' about Klepsch as a candidate.<sup>639</sup> Many EDG members had a personal preference for Pieter Dankert despite him being from the Socialist grouping. Klepsch was deemed less approachable, while Dankert was charismatic and willing to engage with the EDG.<sup>640</sup> Overall, it was very unlikely that Scott-Hopkins would be elected president which would also impact the decision on the chairmanship of the EDG.

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<sup>636</sup> TNA, PREM 19/747, FCO letter to Number Ten: President of the European Parliament, 18 August 1981.

<sup>637</sup> Ibid.

<sup>638</sup> R. Corbett., F.Jacobs., M.,Shackleton, *The European Parliament*, (London, Catermill, 1999), p.116.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid.

<sup>640</sup> Michael Welsh personal diary, 1 May 1981 entry.

In 1980 there were fears that Scott-Hopkins would be opposed, and in 1981 some EDG members had expressed their dissatisfaction about his leadership.<sup>641</sup> Brian Hord (part of the H-bloc and the MEP for West London), was willing to stand against Scott-Hopkins. Hord was an influential MEP with a high profile following his refusal to take his new office in Strasbourg.<sup>642</sup> Despite this, the Conservative Party's chief whip Michael Jopling believed that Scott-Hopkins would only win a handful of votes.<sup>643</sup> But the EDG whip John de Courcy Ling warned that Scott-Hopkins would struggle to be re-elected as chairman if he did not win the presidency as this would further damage his reputation within the EDG. MEP Sir Henry Plumb had the most support internally but was not willing to oppose Scott-Hopkins.<sup>644</sup> Scott-Hopkins had mentioned to the whips that he had no intention to continue his leadership after the 1984 European elections.<sup>645</sup> Thereafter, a compromise was reached in which Scott-Hopkins would remain leader until 1983 and would then be succeeded by Plumb.<sup>646</sup> Thatcher approved of this arrangement, as Plumb had pre-existing relations with French Community members who were important regarding the CAP and budget contribution reform. Plumb had developed strong relations with European politicians prior to 1973 due to his position of being a member of the National Farmers Union (NFU) in 1965, and the NFU president in 1970. Plumb had been president of the NFU during British accession negotiations and negotiated for greater support for British farmers.<sup>647</sup> Thatcher, however, requested that Scott-Hopkins engage with the public more as it would assist in the general public recognition of the EP while also highlighting the major contributions made by Conservative MEPs.<sup>648</sup>

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<sup>641</sup> CCA, THCR 2.11.12.2 part 1, Jopling minute to MT: European Parliament, election for the presidency.

<sup>642</sup> Ibid. Information on Brian Hord. 19 March 1981.

<sup>643</sup> Ibid.

<sup>644</sup> Ibid.

<sup>645</sup> Ibid, Scott-Hopkins letter the Chief Whips Office, 22 March 1981.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid. See TNA, FCO 30/6702, European Parliament: European Democratic Group; possible election of Sir Henry Plumb as President 1 January 1986 – 31 December 1986 for more on Henry Plumb. Or H. Plumb, *The Plumb Line: A Journey through Agriculture and Politics*, (Oxford: Greycoat Press, 2001).

<sup>648</sup> TNA, PREM 19/1035, Conservative Party International Office: Note on the Elections to the Presidency of the European Parliament, 19 January 1982.

Again, this would also address the concerns surrounding MEP morale which shows that Thatcher and her senior advisors saw the benefits of Conservative MEPs. Scott-Hopkins being told to engage more with the public again shows his different leadership style to Peter Kirk who was willing to be more proactive on matters. The presidency and chairmanship, however, show that the EDG was not one cohesive unit as their numbers had increased from 23 prior to direct elections to 64 thereafter.

The matter of the EP presidency was a major event that all MEPs focused on in 1982. West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl even contacted Thatcher regarding the elections. He wanted to confirm that all non-socialists would vote for either Scott-Hopkins or the EPP candidate Egon Klepsch to prevent a socialist candidate from winning.<sup>649</sup> Originally, the EPP in 1979 had agreed to support an EDG member for presidency in the 1982 elections in exchange for British Conservative support of Simone Veil (the outgoing president) in 1979. The EDG had on several occasions attempted to negotiate with the EPP, to little avail. British Conservatives were left frustrated and brought the matter up in the European Democratic Union (EDU).<sup>650</sup> However, the EDU felt that it was a subject best left to the MEPs to resolve, which further frustrated members of the EDG.<sup>651</sup> Klepsch was not supported by the British Conservative MEPs as they felt he had been unsatisfactory in his dealings with the EDG.<sup>652</sup> It was against this background that the elections opened without a firm agreement between the two non-socialist groupings. The first ballot went ahead with Pieter Dankert gaining 106 votes, Klepsch 140, and Scott-Hopkins 63.<sup>653</sup> It became clear that if an agreement was not reached between the EDG and EPP Dankert would win the election. The EDG reiterated that they could not accept Klepsch as a candidate, although no agreement had been reached going into

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<sup>649</sup> Ibid.

<sup>650</sup> Ibid, EDU meeting, 8 January 1982.

<sup>651</sup> Ibid.

<sup>652</sup> Ibid. Meeting notes, 3 February 1982.

<sup>653</sup> Ibid, Presidency of the European Parliament results, 21 January 1982.

the second ballot, the result of which saw Pieter Dankert winning 114 votes, Klepsch 130, and Scott-Hopkins 67.<sup>654</sup> Again the EDG sought an agreement with the EPP, this time, however, with the support of the Liberal grouping, as it became clearer that Pieter Dankert was looking likely to win the presidency. The EDG were willing to accept any candidate from the EPP apart from Klepsch. Scott-Hopkins himself was willing to withdraw his candidacy at this point if such a candidate could be agreed upon. But again, no agreement was reached. The British Conservatives believed that blame lay with Klepsch's campaign team.<sup>655</sup> It was under this confusion that the third ballot was contested with Dankert winning 162 votes, Klepsch 157, and Scott-Hopkins 67.<sup>656</sup> The EDG and EPP disagreement meant the Socialists going into the fourth and final ballot had a relatively large lead.

With Scott-Hopkins no longer in the running, the EPP suggested they would support an EDG candidate in the next presidency election if the EDG used their 67 votes to support Klepsch in the final ballot.<sup>657</sup> The EDG's votes would be enough to ensure Klepsch's electoral victory. However, the EDG could not trust the EPP regarding the support of a future EDG candidate because of this election. Scott-Hopkins also encouraged his grouping to vote freely in the final ballot and there is no evidence to suggest Scott-Hopkins or other MEPs consulted Thatcher or the Conservative Party on this matter. The result of the election saw Dankert win the presidency with 191 votes against Klepsch's 175.<sup>658</sup> Many EDG Conservatives had voted for Dankert citing 'the importance of having a leader with genuine integrity'.<sup>659</sup> The episode worsened relations between the EPP and EDG. The EPP felt the EDG were at fault as voting for Dankert ensured that Klepsch lost; while the EDG felt they would struggle to work with the EPP in the future as they could not be clearly communicated with or trusted.

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<sup>654</sup> Ibid.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid, Conservative Party International Office: Note on the Elections to the Presidency of the European Parliament, 19 January 1982.

<sup>656</sup> Ibid, 23 January 1982.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid, Proposal for European Parliament Presidency, 20 January 1982.

<sup>658</sup> Ibid, Presidency of the European Parliament results, 21 January 1982.

<sup>659</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/2/3, European Democratic Group Bureau Meetings, 23 January 1982.



Many British Conservative MEPs felt disappointed by the EPP.<sup>660</sup> Some EDG members, however, believed that they would be forced into working with the EPP in the future.<sup>661</sup> Regardless, this was an important moment in the EPP–EDG relationship as Klepsch remained active in the EPP until the early 1990s. One Conservative MEP stated that ‘he never forgot this election, and deeply distrusted the EDG’.<sup>662</sup> In his memoirs, Henry Plumb refers to this episode as one ‘of the great low points’ in the EDG and EPP relationship.<sup>663</sup> After the election, Thatcher and the MEPs proposed that the best way to work with the EPP would be by consulting them through the EDU.<sup>664</sup> The election also highlighted the difficulties for Conservative MEPs as they had to continually attempt to work with many MEPs from different European nations. Building and maintaining these relationships was vital to a small grouping such as the EDG, but, as has been shown, this proved difficult between some members of the EPP and EDG due to personality clashes. The long-lasting impact of Klepsch and the EDG was significant in the relationship between the two during this period. It demonstrates the that divide between the two groupings was not largely due to religious or ideological reasons, as argued by Nelsen and Guth.<sup>665</sup> Disagreement arose out of differing personalities, and how a key event like the 1982 presidency election was handled. This election was very significant for the future relationship between the EPP and EDG. Moreover, Thatcher had worked with the MEPs on the election and had suggested working with the EDU in the future which again shows that she was aware of developments in the EP.

In the aftermath, the EDG lost confidence in Scott-Hopkins as a leader following his heavy defeat in the presidency election. Moreover, the EDG had struggled to be an effective, alternative centre-right grouping to the EPP under Scott-Hopkins as they failed to persuade

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<sup>660</sup> Ibid.

<sup>661</sup> Author interview with Michael Welsh, 11 November 2016.

<sup>662</sup> Ibid.

<sup>663</sup> Plumb, p.163.

<sup>664</sup> CCA, THCR, 2.11.12.2, Thatcher European Parliament Presidency election, 18 December 1983.

<sup>665</sup> See Nelsen and Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union: Confessional Culture and the Limits of Integration*, (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2015).

Greek members to join the grouping.<sup>666</sup> Additionally, many groupings still saw the EDG as an extension of the British Conservative government which made the EDG MEPs' job difficult. Because of these factors, the EDG opted to replace Scott-Hopkins in 1982. The decision triggered an internal leadership election in which Plumb won with 36 votes, against Scott-Hopkins' thirteen, and Fred Catherwood's eleven.<sup>667</sup> In his memoirs, Plumb suggests that he was saddened by the departure of Scott-Hopkins but was excited by the potential challenges the leadership brought.<sup>668</sup> Despite Plumb having the support of the Conservatives in Strasbourg there was some apprehension from the party in Westminster. Many were sceptical about Plumb due to his links with the NFU and wondered how this would affect his outlook on the EEC's agricultural policies.<sup>669</sup> Thatcher herself had selected Scott-Hopkins as the leader of the British Conservative MEPs (though he was not her first choice). But as Plumb was made EDG leader, Thatcher moved quickly to make him leader of the British Conservative MEPs. Many felt that with the departure of Scott-Hopkins, Thatcher was losing a major ally in Strasbourg.<sup>670</sup> The reasons that MEPs had turned against Scott-Hopkins were the election of Dankert as European Parliament president and his inability as leader to attract MEPs from other member states to the grouping. As it stood in 1982, 60 members of the EDG were British, three Danish, and one Ulster Unionist. The consequence was that Plumb became leader in February. The episode shows that there was more internal division within the grouping, which occurred due to direct elections increasing its size, but it was also exacerbated by the leadership style of Scott-Hopkins, which differed from Kirk's and eventually Plumb's.

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<sup>666</sup> Greek MEPs and accession will be discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>667</sup> CCA, THCR 2.7.3.5 f20, Policy work and EDG leadership, 25 September 1982.

<sup>668</sup> H. Plumb, *The Plumb Line: A Journey through Agriculture and Politics*, (Oxford, Greycoat Press, 2001), p.7.

<sup>669</sup> CCA, THCR 2.7.3.5 f20, Policy work and EDG leadership, 25 September 1982.

<sup>670</sup> British Universities Film and Video Council, 'Henry Plumb leader of Conservatives in Europe', 11 February 1982.

Plumb was a charismatic leader, and his ‘great talent in life was knowing his own limitations’.<sup>671</sup> He would eventually be the most successful leader due to his ability to delegate.<sup>672</sup> He delegated David Curry to assist in the day to day running of the group in his earlier years as leader, and would then utilise Robert Ramsey in a similar capacity which freed him to be active in leading the grouping. Moreover, with his farming background. Plumb’s first action as the grouping’s leader was to urge the government not to block the rise in farm prices.<sup>673</sup> Plumb’s actions led to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Lord Carrington reiterating the government’s stance, that Britain would oppose any attempt to approve the annual farm price review unless some progress was made in reducing Britain’s EEC contribution.<sup>674</sup> Plumb was not, however, punished for opposing the party’s policy, but his actions caused concern amongst Conservative backbenchers. Ian Gow, the Prime Minister’s Private Secretary, raised concerns about the ‘wide spread consternation regarding Plumb’s conduct’ as well as that of other British Conservative MEPs.<sup>675</sup> Plumb also disputed the idea that if an agreement was not reached on Britain’s budget contributions, this in turn would force Britain to block the rise in farm prices.<sup>676</sup> The block would inevitably create further tensions in the Community. Yet the biggest matter for Plumb in 1982 centred on majority voting in the Council of Ministers, which was debated in the European Parliament. Moving to a majority voting system would eliminate the Luxembourg Compromise, which, in the past, had allowed member states a veto. EDG members and the Conservative Party had initially been ambivalent towards the matter.<sup>677</sup> The early actions of Plumb highlight the active and vocal leader he would become.

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<sup>671</sup> Author interview with Michael Welsh, 11 November 2016.

<sup>672</sup> His successes will be discussed mainly in section four as the grouping expanded under Plumb with Spanish MEPs joining, and in 1987 he succeeded in becoming the first and only British President of the European Parliament.

<sup>673</sup> CCA, THCR 2.6.2.75, Gow minutes to the Prime Minister, 19 May 1982.

<sup>674</sup> Ibid.

<sup>675</sup> Ibid.

<sup>676</sup> Ibid.

<sup>677</sup> Ibid.

Moreover, because Plumb had worked at the NFU since 1965 he had worked with many Continental MEPs and officials in the past and held good relationships with them.<sup>678</sup> It meant that he had the strongest working relationship with Continental MEPs, more so, than any other British Conservative MEP covered in the period of this thesis. His relationship with them would also allow him to achieve his goals in the European Parliament. From a grouping perspective this was convincing MEPs from European nations to join the EDG. However, in 1982 there was still concerns with the British Conservative government of Plumb.

However, it was becoming increasingly likely that the EEC would adopt majority voting. Craig Parsons explains how the idea of majority voting dated back to 1973 with the first round of enlargement.<sup>679</sup> In 1982 the EDG had decided to favour majority voting as it would speed up the decision-making process in the Community, and Plumb even argued this was an important step for the EEC.<sup>680</sup> Moreover, it would also limit France's influence as it would prevent it from blocking proposals from which it did not benefit. France was a major obstacle for Britain, as in 1982 alone it had successfully blocked over 100 proposals.<sup>681</sup> Majority voting was an important matter as it gave smaller countries a larger say in Community affairs. Thus, smaller nations that had limited global influence could have a greater impact on the direction of Europe, a matter not fully grasped by Britain which enjoyed a traditional global role. It is clear that from the outset Plumb wanted to make a large impact. However, the replacement of Scott-Hopkins demonstrated the lack of control the Conservative Party had over the multinational grouping of the EDG. Regardless, the election of Plumb changed the dynamics between Conservative MEPs and Conservative MPs. It was clear from the farm price review that Plumb was willing to act more independently.

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<sup>678</sup> See, H. Plumb, pp.5-32.

<sup>679</sup> C. Parsons, *A Certain Idea of Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), p.117.

<sup>680</sup> CCA, THCR 2/6/2/75, Gow minutes to the Prime Minister, 19 May 1982. Many of these concerns were central to Britain, matters ranged from fisheries, banking and farming reform.

<sup>681</sup> Ibid.

Fisheries remained a concern for the Community with Mediterranean enlargement and the subject was important to both British and Danish MEPs. In 1983 EDG member Kent Kirk, who was also a Danish fisherman, threatened to fish in British waters.<sup>682</sup> These threats were highly problematic as Britain reserved the right to fish exclusively in a twelve-mile radius around its coast, as was agreed in the accession treaty. Neither Denmark nor Britain wanted Kirk to break this arrangement. Many Danish MEPs and Commissioners were quick to voice their concerns, fearing that Kirk's actions would create 'a Falklands attitude' towards Denmark.<sup>683</sup> Despite this, Kirk broke the agreement and fished in British waters, his reason being that Britain should break its restrictive policies on fisheries and be a more effective member state.<sup>684</sup> Many of the EDG members had lobbied for Kirk to be ousted from the grouping as his actions had alienated the EDG. Kirk's actions showed how individuals could create problems within the EDG.

The Labour MEP for Tyne and South Wear Joyce Quinn accused Kirk of being irresponsible.<sup>685</sup> Kirk continued to face open hostility from fellow MEPs during European Parliament sessions. Barbara Castle, the leader of the British Labour MEPs, supported by Winfred Ewing, suggested that it was 'offensive for Kirk to address the Parliament'.<sup>686</sup> Because of this, other members were forced into defending Kirk. For example, the Conservative Lord O'Hagan objected to the criticisms of Ewing and Castle.<sup>687</sup> The situation was exacerbated by the fact that the EDG as a grouping was in a transitional period: Scott-Hopkins was the outgoing chairman in his final year. Moreover, Christopher Prout (MEP for Shropshire and Stafford) was elected the EDG chief whip. Brian Hord (MEP for West

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<sup>682</sup> TNA, FCO 30/5427, Common Fisheries Policy: appeal by Captain Kent Kirk MEP, 5 January 1983.

<sup>683</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, H. Barnes, *Financial times*, 'Foreign Secretary urges Kirk not to carry out his threat', 6 January 1983.

<sup>684</sup> Ibid.

<sup>685</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, G. Clarke, *The Times*, 'MEPs accuse Kirk of irresponsibility', 11 January 1983.

<sup>686</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, G. Clarke, *The Times*, 'Kirk stirs Strasbourg Waters', 14 January 1983.

<sup>687</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 18 February 1983.

London) was also made deputy chief whip in the same year.<sup>688</sup> The fisheries matter was contentious, and Kirk's attempt had led to the media placing closer scrutiny on the affair. However, it did not worsen Anglo-Danish relations as Denmark had swiftly condemned Kirk's actions.<sup>689</sup> The episode worsened the EDG's standing with other groupings, which impacted their conduct in the European Parliament as they were a small grouping, this in turn emphasised again the need for the EDG to expand.

In 1983 the European Parliament felt necessary to conduct a detailed study into Northern Ireland. Throughout the early 1980s there had been a number of attacks on British soldiers causing multiple deaths and casualties.<sup>690</sup> Thus Northern Ireland was an extremely sensitive and important matter for the British Conservative government. As a result, the British Conservative government made steps to oppose the report and were supported in this by the EDG. Eammon O'Kane has shown just how sensitive and significant the topic was to the Conservative government.<sup>691</sup> The EDG brought the matter before the Bureau of the European Parliament to vote against this initiative, and to prevent the report from being commissioned: unsuccessfully, as it struggled to gain the support of the EPP.<sup>692</sup> Michael Welsh commented that the EPP struggled to work with the EDG in 1983 due to the impact of the presidency elections of 1982.<sup>693</sup> The vote again showed that the EDG was becoming a less effective group in the European Parliament due to its size in comparison with large and diverse groupings such as the EPP or the Socialists. Meanwhile, Conservatives in Westminster also attempted to thwart the report. They wanted to examine the powers of the European Parliament and whether it had the ability to produce such a report. After consulting with the Attorney General it was agreed there was little hope for Britain to successfully stop the

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<sup>688</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 20/32/49, EDG committee meeting, 15 June 1983.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid, Danish Prime Minister addresses European Parliament, 17 February 1983.

<sup>690</sup> See E. O'Kane, Britain, *Ireland and Northern Ireland since 1980: The Totality of Relationships*, (London: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>691</sup> Ibid.

<sup>692</sup> TNA, PREM 19/168, Number 10 to FCO, 4 March 1983.

<sup>693</sup> Michael Welsh Personal Diary, 2 March 1983 entry.

European Parliament, even if the matter was brought before the European Court of Justice (ECJ).<sup>694</sup> The Community treaties allowed the European Parliament to conduct studies such as that proposed into Northern Ireland's social and economic situation. However, the European Parliament did not have powers to provide a report on the internal political situation in Northern Ireland.<sup>695</sup> Both the EDG and the Conservative government emphasised this to their European counterparts. The commissioning of the Northern Ireland report showed that the European Parliament by 1983 did have some influence in the Community.

Yet the EDG continued to lobby against the report arguing it could have an impact on Anglo-Northern Ireland relations. They also ensured the report would not examine political issues. The Minister of Europe Douglas Hurd raised the matter at an EEC Minister meeting. Here it was suggested that many other member states shared Britain's views. At the meeting, Hurd requested that Ministers should attempt to 'head off' their MEPs.<sup>696</sup> Baroness Diana Elles (MEP for Thames Valley and a member of the Political Affairs Committee in the European Parliament) was also consulted. She argued that the government and the EDG should not oppose the report strongly as this would portray Britain as an unenthusiastic member state.<sup>697</sup> Additionally, she suggested it could draw unnecessary attention to Northern Ireland's political matters, which could damage both Britain and Northern Ireland.<sup>698</sup> It was thus decided that the British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Francis Pym privately oversee the report with the chairman of the Political Committee.<sup>699</sup> The Northern Ireland report is an example where Whitehall took interest in an European Parliament committee and MEPs had stepped in to ensure that the potential political fallout was minimized. As a result, Diane Elles developed a stronger link with Foreign and

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<sup>694</sup> TNA, PREM 19/168, Coles minute to MT, 3 March 1983.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid.

<sup>696</sup> Ibid.

<sup>697</sup> Ibid. Elles letter to MT, 11 February 1983.

<sup>698</sup> Ibid.

<sup>699</sup> Ibid.

Commonwealth Office officials and Thatcher.<sup>700</sup> Regardless, Pym's position allowed the Conservatives to influence the report effectively. Many also felt that other member states were 'in no position to exert necessary control over their MEPs even if they wanted to do so.'<sup>701</sup> The approach succeeded as it made discussing the report with the chairman easier. It also demonstrates how other member states were less successful than the British Conservatives in managing their MEPs.

The EDG managed to gain concessions from the Political Committee and the Bureau for the European Parliament, as it was agreed that the report would not trespass into constitutional matters.<sup>702</sup> The report was an instance where an MEP such as Elles worked effectively with Ministers including Pym and Thatcher to gain concessions on European Parliament matters. Regarding the report, it was decided that the Danish MEP Niels Haagerup, who sat with the Liberal Grouping, would be the lead.<sup>703</sup> Fortunately, the Danish MEPs of the EDG held good relations with Haagerup and worked with him on the report.<sup>704</sup> The House of Lords also had confidence in Haagerup, the Labour Baroness Felicity Ewart-Biggs even commented that she did 'not think that there should be any concern as to the calibre of that very serious and cautious Dane, Mr. Niels Haagerup, in whose hands the inquiry will lie.'<sup>705</sup> Plumb later stated that Haagerup being selected 'ensured the report was heading in the right direction'.<sup>706</sup> Due to Haagerup's selection, the EDG managed to secure further concessions as he agreed to take a 'low key' approach.<sup>707</sup> He agreed to hold no public discussions and did not visit Dublin. Jim Prior, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, believed that the government should encourage Haagerup to attend an informal meeting in London to discuss the report. Prior also

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<sup>700</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>701</sup> TNA, PREM 19/168, FCO relations with MEPs, 19 March 1983.

<sup>702</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Political Committee Report, 9 February 1983.

<sup>703</sup> Ibid.

<sup>704</sup> Michael Welsh personal diary entry, 17 February 1983.

<sup>705</sup> *Hansard*, HL Deb vol 440 cc562-89, 14 March 1983.

<sup>706</sup> H. Plumb, p.78.

<sup>707</sup> TNA, PREM 19/168, Prior to ME: European Parliament Northern Ireland, 15 May 1983.



stated that he would use his influence in the European Parliament to attempt to persuade moderate MEPs, in tandem with efforts made by the EDG.<sup>708</sup> Haagerup also agreed that no major developments in the report would occur in the run up to the UK general election which was to be held in the same year (1983). The concessions the EDG managed to secure shows that the effectiveness of the grouping in the European Parliament on the Northern Ireland matter, as the concessions meant that attention was not drawn to a very sensitive topic for Britain. Moreover, the report was an example of how Conservative MEPs and MPs could work together successfully to achieve their goals, demonstrating how the two could work effectively together if necessary.

The report, however, had drawn the attention of Thatcher as demonstrated at a meeting held for the MEPs on 1 March 1983 in Downing Street, where she reiterated her stance on the matter, believing that the duty of the European Parliament was just to ‘rubber stamp a decision made by HMG.’<sup>709</sup> Henry Plumb and Diane Elles attempted to ease tensions but were unsuccessful as Thatcher went on to state that the report was undermining British sovereignty, which was exacerbated by the attendance of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s legal team. Thatcher continued discussions, moving onto matters of the CAP and the withholding of Britain’s budget contribution. MEP Michael Welsh commented that ‘the trouble is that she [Thatcher] has nothing but contempt for “The Assembly” and for us regarding any sort of interference in inter-governmental negotiations as an insult.’<sup>710</sup> After the meeting had finished the MEPs left Downing Street and were confronted with members of the media including John Sargent and George Clark (European correspondents for *The Times* and the BBC), but avoided answering any questions. However, the following day many

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<sup>708</sup> Ibid.

<sup>709</sup> Michael Welsh personal diary, entry, 2 March 1983.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid.

newspapers accurately reported on the meeting.<sup>711</sup> Thatcher then held an emergency meeting with Plumb in which she suggested the trust with MEPs had been damaged.<sup>712</sup> Many MEPs denied they were responsible for the leak, while others stated that ‘it was a stitch up’ and that Number Ten officials had been responsible, while shifting the blame onto the MEPs.<sup>713</sup> Regardless of how the leak occurred, some MEPs became increasingly disillusioned and began to act more autonomously from the Conservative Party. The decision to act more autonomously by these MEPs was not solely from this meeting but also from the way some MPs in general viewed MEPs: as shown throughout this thesis they often questioned the function of the European Parliament in House of Commons debates. Moreover, a significant factor that led to certain MEPs acting more autonomously was that only two MEPs held dual mandates after 1979. Although the dual mandate had been very demanding, it had provided a method of clearer communication between MEPs and MPs which was lost by 1983.<sup>714</sup> It is also important to consider Foreign and Commonwealth Office thinking in this period as the above has situated the Prime Minister’s thinking as part of mainstream government attitudes, rather than her personal predilection to present herself as isolated, and at odds, with Foreign and Commonwealth Office which was part of a consciously manufactured political image. Additionally, from Thatcher’s perspective relations with MEPs had not worsened only because of this meeting. It was a culmination of events that led to some Conservatives becoming more dismissive of the MEPs. Matters from direct elections, MEPs’ salaries, and the site of the European Parliament were all obstacles that the Conservative Party had to deal with, despite the relatively minor role the European Parliament played in the government’s overall European policy. However, Thatcher supported the MEPs on many of these issues. Furthermore, she would continue to build relationships with individual MEPs, working

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<sup>711</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Times*, J. Wyles, ‘MEPs at Number Ten’, 2 March 1983.

<sup>712</sup> Michael Welsh Personal Diary, 2 March 1983 entry.

<sup>713</sup> Author interview with Michael Welsh, 11 November 2016.

<sup>714</sup> James Spicer was the only MEP to hold a dual mandate by 1983 and would go on to lose his MEP seat in the 1984 European Elections.

closely with them on matters such as the rebate.<sup>715</sup> The meeting, however, was an important moment as it builds on literature regarding Thatcher's attitude towards the European Parliament. It can be argued that the meeting adds a new strand of thinking regarding Thatcher and the Community, on which much has been written. Hugo Young stated that Thatcher 'at important moments [gave] Europe the loudest place on the agenda'.<sup>716</sup> Yet, the 1983 meeting corroborates more the view of David Reynolds who suggests that Thatcher was no different to Mitterrand or Kohl: they were 'all playing the same game'.<sup>717</sup> Thatcher was confrontational in defending British interests. France was just as vocal on matters central to them such as the CAP and the site of the European Parliament; as was Germany over the ERM. With Northern Ireland being a sensitive and central concern for the Conservative government, the meeting in 1983 is an example of how Thatcher was willing to take a more confrontational stance on an important matter. Yet the literature mentioned above does not consider the Conservative MEPs or the European Parliament when assessing Thatcher's attitude towards the Community. Additionally, following chapters will show Thatcher remained pragmatic towards the European Parliament and even worked with MEPs on matters such as the rebate.

Haagerup's report was due to be released on 1 December 1983, and he forwarded a copy to Michael Butler, the UK representative to the EEC, on 30 November 1983. Butler concluded that the report was both 'balanced and moderate', as promised.<sup>718</sup> It called for the Community to provide economic support for Northern Ireland, while condemning the acts of terrorism and violence. Importantly, it mentioned nothing regarding constitutional change. The single point of contention was the resolution that argued for the creation of a joint Anglo-Irish

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<sup>715</sup> The chapter Community Budget will show how MEPs Scott-Hopkins and Christopher Jackson built strong relationships with Thatcher.

<sup>716</sup> H. Young, *This Blessed Plot Churchill to Blair*, (London: Macmillan, 1999), p.306.

<sup>717</sup> D. Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the 20th Century*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p.267.

<sup>718</sup> TNA, PREM 19/1069, Letter to Number Ten: Northern Ireland, 23 May 1983.

parliamentary institution with representatives from both countries,<sup>719</sup> a matter the EDG and the Conservatives feared would be picked up by the media and which would harm both the UK and Northern Ireland. Additionally, it stated that there was no simple solution to resolve the problems Northern Ireland faced, and that British withdrawal from Northern Ireland would not end the acts of violence.<sup>720</sup> The report also suggested that the Community believed Britain played an important role in finding an overall solution. Lastly, it urged for Britain to join the EMS as this would eliminate obstacles to trade. Britain joining the EMS would stimulate trade between Britain, Ireland, and Northern Ireland which could potentially lessen the chances of further violence.<sup>721</sup> Overall, the report was balanced, the EDG and Conservatives worked in conjunction to ensure this outcome and were assisted by Haagerup's leadership who was sympathetic towards Britain. However, the very fact that the report was commissioned despite opposition from member states demonstrated the growing influence of the European Parliament in the Community.

Northern Ireland continued to be an issue in 1984 as the Parliament voted to adopt the Haagerup report. The vote occurred on 29 March with 124 votes in favour, three against, and 63 abstentions.<sup>722</sup> Though other MEPs still felt Britain was responsible for the situation. John Hume of the Socialist grouping, for example, stated that Britain 'in fact is a part of the problem' and that Northern Ireland could not be united 'at the point of a gun'.<sup>723</sup> EPP member Jean Pender restated that the Community did not have powers to interfere with political and constitutional matters. However, like many other MEPs he suggested that the Parliament could not ignore violence within a fellow member state.<sup>724</sup> Diane Elles of the EDG emphasised that the Parliament could not discuss political, legal, and constitutional

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<sup>719</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Haagerup report, 2 December 1983.

<sup>720</sup> Ibid.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid.

<sup>722</sup> TNA, PREM 19/1285, Northern Ireland UKDEL Strasbourg telegram to FCO, 29 March 1984.

<sup>723</sup> Ibid.

<sup>724</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament plenary session, 4 April 1984.

matters of member states. She also drew attention to the fact that the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland wanted peace and wanted to remain within the UK. She concluded by praising Haagerup on the report and his personal handling of a very sensitive subject.<sup>725</sup> EDG member Sir Fred Catherwood also praised Haagarup, but argued that the EDG felt uncomfortable in voting for it.<sup>726</sup> This was because the British members of the EDG represented the Conservative government as well as their constituencies; hence the majority of the EDG abstained, feeling that supporting the report could jeopardize the whole matter, as well as causing more friction between MEPs and Westminster Conservatives.

MEPs then looked towards the Commission to address the overall stance of the Community regarding Northern Ireland. Lorenzo Natali, the Italian Christian Democrat, clarified the Commission's position.<sup>727</sup> He suggested that the Commission lacked powers to pass political judgement on Northern Ireland, and wanted larger emphasis placed on alleviating Northern Ireland's economic and social problems which were matters where the Community could play a role. Moreover, this would not create tensions between Britain and Northern Ireland. The Community had already started providing aid to Belfast but the Commission wanted this to be extended to border areas. The request would be more difficult to fulfil as it would require the full support of both Britain and Ireland. The proposal could also have a political impact on Northern Ireland, hence the Commission agreed to set up a group of Commissioners to examine the matter. Michael Cunningham has argued that Britain had struggled to deal with Northern Ireland since 1972.<sup>728</sup> That it was an extremely contentious matter for Britain is highlighted by the utter discretion with which the Commission handled the problem. The report was also a rare moment for the Conservative Party as it had to rely

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<sup>725</sup> Ibid.

<sup>726</sup> Ibid.

<sup>727</sup> TNA, PREM 19/1285, Northern Ireland UKDEL Strasbourg telegram to FCO, 29 March 1984.

<sup>728</sup> M. Cunningham, *British Government Policy in Northern Ireland, 1969-2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp.12-43.

heavily upon their MEPs to deliver on a sensitive topic. Yet despite this, relations after the Downing Street meeting were damaged. Andrew Moravcsik has argued that the primary concern for the Community related to economic matters.<sup>729</sup> This to a very small extent is evidenced by the Northern Ireland report, particularly the recommendations made by the Commission.

A big change occurred in January 1985 when Jacques Delors became President of the European Commission. Delors greatly reformed the Community which affected the relationship between the Community and the British Conservative government, hence it is important to examine his early ideas, and what impact they had on the European Parliament as well as on Britain. Helen Drake has stated that Delors ‘provided a form of European leadership which in its duration and imagery was unprecedented in the history of European Integration’.<sup>730</sup> In his tenure there would be significant treaty reforms which would also give the European Parliament more powers. Delors had been part of the French Socialist Party since 1974, and in 1984 was France’s Finance Minister. He was quick to outline his views for the future direction of the Community and believed that deeper integration was required for the Community to develop and he wanted to build a ‘tangible Europe.’<sup>731</sup> Delors wanted the changes to have taken place by 1992. Neil Nugent explains that Delors wished to focus on three areas that would develop the overall Community.<sup>732</sup> First, he wanted to enlarge the internal market, promoting economic growth in member states, which in turn would provide jobs. Unemployment was a central issue for the Community in the 1980s. Secondly, he wanted to strengthen the EMS. This was linked to his third area of focus: the development of a system of convergence of economies.<sup>733</sup> These three objectives were to work in tandem to

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<sup>729</sup> A. Moravcsik, *European Union and World Politics*, (London: Routledge 2006), pp.220-240.

<sup>730</sup> H. Drake, *Jacques Delors: Perspectives on a European Leader*, (London: Routledge, 2000), p.1.

<sup>731</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Community Bulletin, 30 January 1985.

<sup>732</sup> N. Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, (London: Palgrave, 2015), p.42.

<sup>733</sup> Ibid.

improve the overall economy of Europe, which at this time was lagging behind Japan and the US. Initially, Delors had three methods to re-launch Europe: closer foreign policy cooperation, closer monetary cooperation, and the single market. Of these, the single market had the least opposition from the heads of member states. Delors was aware that ‘Thatcher had played a large role in [his] nomination’ and he wanted to pick an ambitious project that had Thatcher’s support.<sup>734</sup> The single market greatly appealed to Britain. However, as suggested by Desmond Dinan, Thatcher had opposed the idea of treaty reform which Delors was considering.<sup>735</sup> Delors’ relationship with Thatcher was very significant in the period between 1985 and 1990 and much has been written on the subject. Brendan Evans stated that ‘Thatcher, who recognised Delors abilities, hated his politics’.<sup>736</sup> Stephen George concludes that she had supported Delors initially because he would ‘rein back the left-wing socialist policies implemented by Mitterrand’.<sup>737</sup> Their relationship would have a significant impact on the future of the Community, as well as on the relationship between the EDG and Thatcher.

Delors’ plan required a commitment to deeper integration which the Conservative government opposed. He was heavily influenced by the Albert-Ball report which was released in 1983 and written by French economist Michel Albert and James Ball (at the London Business School). The report was extremely popular in France and outlined a plan for a single market.<sup>738</sup> Later, in January 1985, Delors’ also suggested that he wanted to strengthen the European Currency Unit (ECU) through creating an official ECU which would be managed by the US.<sup>739</sup> Delors understood that previous Commissions had struggled to achieve their agendas due to unanimous voting in the Council of Ministers, and he therefore

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<sup>734</sup> Author interview with Anthony Teasdale, 20 January 2017.

<sup>735</sup> D. Dinan, *Origins and Evaluation of the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p.319.

<sup>736</sup> B. Evans, *Thatcherism and British Politics, 1975-1999*, (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), p.66.

<sup>737</sup> S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain and the Community*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.164.

<sup>738</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, M. Albert and R. J. Ball, ‘Towards European Economic Recovery in the 1980s’, European Parliament Working Documents 1983-1984, 31 August 1983.

<sup>739</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Community Bulletin, 7 January 1985.

wanted to move to a majority voting system. However, forcing policies through the Council would effectively bypass the European Parliament causing further problems between the Council and the European Parliament. Lord Cockfield would also play a central role in expanding the internal market. Cockfield was a Commissioner appointed by Thatcher in 1984. At his inaugural speech to the European Parliament, Delors stated that he sought a larger role for the Parliament. He argued that both the Commission and the European Parliament would have to work closely together if the Community was to move forward.<sup>740</sup> Although many agreed with this, EDG members were split. Some supported Delors while others were reluctant to see the European Parliament's powers increase too quickly.<sup>741</sup> Despite this, the European Parliament voted in favour of Delors' plan for a stronger EMS by 207 votes to 34 (there were 37 abstentions).<sup>742</sup> Delors had a clear plan for streamlining the Community's decision-making process. Moreover, with the need for the development of the internal market, he placed emphasis on economic growth. His ideas, however, required deeper integration, a matter opposed by the British Conservatives. Thatcher herself and many in the Conservative Party saw Delors' plans as an encroachment on British sovereignty. From the outset it was clear there were differences between the way Thatcher and Delors wanted the Community to develop, and the speed in which it should. Delors' plan also meant that MEPs would once more have to work together with Conservative MPs in the future.

Britain, like other member states, was still experiencing the effects of the recession and, despite some Conservatives opposing Delors' early ideas, some Conservative MEPs were in favour of deeper integration. Plumb argued that Britain should join the EMS. In January 1985 Plumb argued that sterling could have been protected against the US dollar had it been in the

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<sup>740</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Delors Inaugural Speech to the EP, 14 January 1985.

<sup>741</sup> Author interview with Anthony Teasdale, 20 January 2017.

<sup>742</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Delors Inaugural Speech to the EP, 14 January 1985.



EMS.<sup>743</sup> He also understood that the EMS would force the Bank of England to intervene in the currency markets at an early stage which would have a profound effect on sterling. However, he also believed that if the UK were to join the EMS after a decline in the value of sterling it would be seen as trying to prop up its currency at a time of crisis.<sup>744</sup> Delors, who had wanted to strengthen the EMS, also encouraged Britain to join.<sup>745</sup> Lord Cockfield had discussed the matter with MEPs and stated that the Commission had little influence over Britain's future regarding the EMS, regardless of the new Commission's position. The EMS question again shows how Plumb was willing to be more vocal than previous leaders of the EDG.

Furthermore, there were many who opposed the EMS, including John Redwood who was an advisor to Thatcher in 1985. He argued that North Sea oil had a large impact on sterling, unlike other currencies that were tied to the EMS.<sup>746</sup> He also believed that pressure would continue to be put on sterling by speculators and Britain would have to defend its value. He likened it to the crisis that Labour experienced in the 1960s (when the decision to devalue the pound was taken under Wilson).<sup>747</sup> Thatcher also believed that joining 'would inhibit some of our present freedom of action'.<sup>748</sup> The reaction of Plumb also shows that the Conservative MEPs disagreed with Thatcher and contributed to the division over EMS in the Conservative Party. The EMS was the first major issue on which Conservative MEPs and the party disagreed. The disagreement arose mainly due to the leadership of Plumb who, as seen in 1984, was willing to be more vocal and outspoken than his predecessor. His actions

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<sup>743</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Times*, 'Plumb says EMS would have protected the pound', 16 January 1985.

<sup>744</sup> Ibid.

<sup>745</sup> TNA, PREM 19/1456, Delors and the EMS, 20 January 1985.

<sup>746</sup> Ibid., Number ten letter to MT: Joining the EMS, 31 January 1985.

<sup>747</sup> S. R. Dockrill, *Britain's Retreat from East of Suez: The Choice between Europe and the World?*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp.199-202.

<sup>748</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 74 cc173-8626, 8 February 1985.

encouraged other MEPs to do the same. The differences of opinion over EMS also displayed the divisions within the Conservative Party as a whole over the Community.

Overall in this period, the 1982 European Parliament presidency election greatly damaged the relationship between the EDG and the EPP, as Klepsch would remain a central figure in the EPP. Furthermore, it has shown that some EDG members felt they could not trust the EPP which supplements the existing literature regarding the relationship between the British Conservatives and the EPP which suggest that divisions occurred due to religion. Nelsen and Guth suggest that the religious divide between the British and Continental Conservative MEPs caused underlying tensions;<sup>749</sup> while Heuser and Buffet argue that religion was very important to the EPP and that the situation was exacerbated by the ambivalent views British Conservative MEPs had towards religion.<sup>750</sup> The chapter suggests divisions were created due to disagreements and differences in personalities as seen in the European Parliament presidency election. The period also saw a change of leadership in the EDG which affected the dynamics of the grouping. Plumb's leadership impacted the relationship between the Conservatives at Westminster and the MEPs. Although MEPs disagreed with the party regarding the EMS, on many other issues they agreed, and worked effectively together as seen with the Haagerup report. However, the Downing Street meeting with MEPs in 1983 damaged the relationship between some MEPs and Westminster. It is important to bear in mind that the relationship worsened due to other reasons such as some MPs criticising the European Parliament openly in the House of Commons. More importantly, the relationship between some MEPs and MPs was strained because fewer MEPs held a dual mandate, which led to a weakening in communication between the two parliaments. The meeting also adds to literature regarding Thatcher's attitudes towards the Community. John Young suggests that

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<sup>749</sup> See B. Nelsen and L. Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union*, (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2015).

<sup>750</sup> B. Heuser and C. Buffet, eds, *Haunted by History: Myths in International Relations*, (Oxford: Berghahn, 1998).

Thatcher was pragmatic towards the Community,<sup>751</sup> while David Reynolds argues that she was no different to other European leaders in only defending her nation's interest.<sup>752</sup> Furthermore, Hugo Young states that 'at important moments [she] gave Europe the loudest place on the agenda'.<sup>753</sup> It again shows that she was willing to be pragmatic and confrontational on matters that were central to the Conservative government such as Northern Ireland when examining the European Parliament in this period.

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<sup>751</sup> J.W. Young, p.138.

<sup>752</sup> D. Reynolds. 267.

<sup>753</sup> H. Young, *This Blessed Plot from Churchill to Blair*, p.306.

## **Chapter Six: Enlargement and Powers of the European Parliament**

The following chapter will examine the importance of Greek, Spanish, and Portuguese accession. Accession enlarged the European Parliament and provided a chance for the EDG to add to its numbers. The EDG failed in securing Greek members but succeeded in securing Spanish MEPs. Adding Spanish MEPs to the grouping marked the first real success for the EDG since 1979 as they were no longer seen as a non-diverse grouping. The second part of the chapter will discuss the powers of the European Parliament. It will describe the issues surrounding the site of the European Parliament and the importance of the Spinelli report. By doing so, it examines the powers of the European Parliament as well as examining the effect this had on the relationship between Conservative MEPs and MPs.

### Mediterranean Enlargement

This section focuses on the EDG attempting to expand and will show how the grouping failed to secure Greek MEPs which contributed to the downfall of Scott-Hopkins. It will also illustrate how, under Henry Plumb's leadership, the EDG was able to expand and gain Spanish MEPs, which marked the first real success for the grouping since direct elections as the EDG was no longer stigmatised as being a British Conservative lobby.

In 1980 the Community had to prepare for Greek accession which would officially occur in 1981. The distribution of seats in the European Parliament had already been resolved in 1979. Direct elections had spurred on developments in the European Parliament which meant that many matters had already been addressed. However, the number of Commissioners for Greece had not been decided, and with a European Council meeting set for April 1980 Britain believed the matter could be concluded. Italy, with the support of Denmark, wanted to reduce

the number of Commissioners universally despite enlargement.<sup>754</sup> Ministers for Britain remained neutral as they had not fully considered the matter in 1980.<sup>755</sup> The European Parliament was already prepared for enlargement and could cope with new members despite it having to manage a larger number of personnel in comparison to other Community institutions. It also showed that the European Parliament was better equipped for enlargement than the other Community institutions, especially if a decision on the number of Commissioners was not taken soon. The EDG was keen to accelerate the cumbersome procedures of the European Parliament to keep up with the other institutions of the Community.<sup>756</sup> However, Greek accession provided a unique opportunity for the European Parliament to lead matters on coping with new members, partly because of the disagreement between the Commission and the Council of Ministers over enlargement. Desmond Dinan concludes that the Council of Ministers ‘disregarded the negative opinions of the Commission’ on Greek accession.<sup>757</sup> Maresceau and Lannon give a more detailed study on the struggles of the Commission regarding Mediterranean enlargement and the economic problems they might cause.<sup>758</sup> Enlargement also highlighted a stark difference in British Conservative European policy when compared with the CAP and budget contribution. Ministers were more proactive on those matters as there was some clarity from the Conservative leadership, in contrast to the lack of clarity regarding the number of Greek Commissioners. The confusion caused meant that Conservative MEPs and Commissioners could act more independently. It also shows the limited role the European Parliament had in the overall European policy of the British government.

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<sup>754</sup> TNA, PREM 19/753, European Council preparation by FCO, 23 April 1980.

<sup>755</sup> Ibid.

<sup>756</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>757</sup> D. Dinan, p.288.

<sup>758</sup> M. Maresceau and E. Lannon, eds, *The EU's Enlargement and Mediterranean Strategies: A Comparative Analysis*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

Greek accession provided the opportunity for groupings in the European Parliament to expand their numbers. EDG members, particularly Lord Bethell, were keen on the *Nea Demokratia* (New Democracy) members joining the EDG.<sup>759</sup> The EDG needed to expand and be more diverse to have greater influence in the European Parliament. New Democracy was a Conservative Party that could potentially join the EDG. New Democracy and the British Conservatives had a history of working together since Greece became a democratic state in 1974. Lord Bethell, who had been part of the original cohort of British Conservative MEPs in 1973, had been put in charge of European Conservatives' (as they were known then) relations with New Democracy in 1975.<sup>760</sup> Geoffrey Rippon, when he became leader, and subsequently Scott-Hopkins, both supported Lord Bethell's work with New Democracy.

Since 1975 Bethell had regularly attended meetings between the European Parliament and the Greek Parliament, and was also an observer on the committee for Greek accession to the Community.<sup>761</sup> In 1979 he had even led a small group of EDG members to Athens where they had discussions about the Community with George Rallis the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Constantine Stephanopolous the Minister for the Presidency, and Evangelos Averoff the Minister of National Defence.<sup>762</sup> Bethell, however, began to grow anxious on the question of where the Greek MEPs would sit as accession neared. In September 1980 he went with the EDG bureau to Athens to discuss groupings with Ministers, yet the New Democracy members were already considering their options regarding groupings in the EP. Bethell believed there was some strong support from members of New Democracy to join the EDG, but there were also some concerns.<sup>763</sup> They did not like the fact that the EDG was mainly composed of British Conservative members. Moreover, they feared that in the 1984 European

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<sup>759</sup> TNA, PREM, 19/236, Greek Accession and New Democracy, 3 September 1980.

<sup>760</sup> Ibid.

<sup>761</sup> The European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee examined matters of Accession. The Foreign Office civil servants took great interest in the committee's work particularly regarding matters of Community enlargement. See, TNA, FCO 98/1048, Relations between the European Community and Greece 1980-81.

<sup>762</sup> TNA, FCO 98/1048, EP Foreign Affairs Committee report, 11 January 1980.

<sup>763</sup> TNA, PREM, 19/236, Lord Bethell to MT, 19 September 1980.

elections the number of EDG members would be greatly reduced. David Close also suggests there were divisions on ideology over how the two viewed Conservatism.<sup>764</sup> Additionally, New Democracy had other options available to them besides the EDG.

Both the EPP and the Liberal groupings had expressed their interest in the Greek party. The EDG was a small grouping and in a larger group such as the EPP New Democracy members could better influence policy. Furthermore, there were practical problems for the EDG. A Greek general election was likely to occur in May 1981 which New Democracy could lose. The credibility of the Greek right had been damaged as they were associated with the military that had been overthrown in 1974.<sup>765</sup> Moreover, Greek members could have opted to sit independently or form their own grouping. Only one MEP from another country was required to form a two-nationality grouping and with Greece having twenty- seats allocated in the European Parliament this was possible. Furthermore, with Spanish and Portuguese accession imminent they could form a grouping in following years composed mainly of members from Southern European states. Since direct elections the EDG had been seeking to expand to be a more effective centre-right grouping as the EPP and Socialist numbers had grown which diminished the influence of the EDG.

Thatcher was scheduled to have a state visit to Athens in late 1980, and Bethell proposed that she discuss European Parliament groupings with George Rallis (who would have the final say on where the party would sit) and the benefits of being part of the EDG. In a letter to Thatcher he outlined five key benefits New Democracy would gain if it joined the EDG.<sup>766</sup> First, he suggested that the British and Danish grouping was sympathetic to the accession of new members. Secondly, Bethell pointed out that Britain and Greece had similar geographical interests as they both sat on the periphery of the Community. For Greece, the

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<sup>764</sup> D. Close, *Greece since 1945: Politics, Economy and Society*, (London: Longman, 2002), p.139-160.

<sup>765</sup> Ibid.

<sup>766</sup> TNA, PREM, 19/236, Lord Bethell to MT, 19 September 1980.

trade routes through Yugoslavia and the sea link with Italy were important, while for Britain the channel link was paramount. Thirdly, if New Democracy were to join it would be the second largest contingent of the EDG, granting it senior positions in the grouping. Fourthly, there was the matter of religion. If New Democracy sat with the EPP there might be tensions between Roman Catholic ideology and Greek Orthodoxy. The EDG was not concerned with religion. Lastly, New Democracy, like British Conservative MEPs, was not federalist.<sup>767</sup> Bethell believed this differed from both the EPP and Liberal groupings, which was reflected in 1980 when both groupings were in favour of majority voting in the Council. Although initially, a merger would undoubtedly highlight differences, the EDG members remained keen on gaining New Democracy members, as it would give the EDG more influence in the European Parliament.<sup>768</sup> Bethell had stated to Thatcher that 'it would rid us of the label of being a simply British lobby'.<sup>769</sup> Moreover, it would make the EDG stronger financially which would be vital if the budget debate led to Britain withholding its contribution. Importantly, Scott-Hopkins was not involved in the majority of these discussions. Thus, when the EDG ultimately failed to obtain Greek MEPs, Scott-Hopkins was held responsible as he did not engage the Greek MEPs personally as he instead opted to defer the responsibility onto Bethell.

Thatcher eventually discussed matters with George Rallis in Athens, who suggested it was a decision the party, rather than him personally, would have to take.<sup>770</sup> In 1980, the party had decided it would sit as an independent grouping and postpone the decision on which grouping to join until it had more experience of Community affairs. Rallis also suggested to Thatcher that they would wait until after the 1981 general election, a conclusion with which the EDG

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<sup>767</sup> Ibid.

<sup>768</sup> CCA, CATH 243, EDG influence and enlargement, 15 September 1980.

<sup>769</sup> TNA, PREM, 19/236, Lord Bethell to MT, 19 September 1980.

<sup>770</sup> Ibid, MT to Lord Bethell, 8 October 1980.



agreed.<sup>771</sup> The eventual failure to secure Greek MEPs also contributed in Scott-Hopkins's downfall despite him having limited input in the matter as Bethell led the discussions with New Democracy. Bethell had even been able to discuss the matter with Thatcher, who in turn raised the subject with Rallis which again demonstrates that Thatcher did work with MEPs. Yet the eventual inability to secure Greek members was a significant failure for the EDG, as they would continue to be a non-diverse grouping. The struggle to recruit and retain MEPs from other nations was the main reason why the EDG failed to be a successful alternate centre-right grouping, which was confirmed when they made the decision join the EPP in 1992.

Greece joined the Community in January 1981, marking the second enlargement and increasing the membership to ten. Enlarging the Community again meant that the overall decision-making process would become even more cumbersome. The domestic situation in Greece was also altered by the general election, which in turn impacted the European Parliament and the centre-right groupings. Under George Rallis, New Democracy had lost the election by a landslide to the Panhellenic Socialist movement (PASOK) led by Andreas Papandreou, PASOK winning 172 seats against New Democracy's 115. In total, 185 of the 300 seats were won by PASOK or the Communist Party.<sup>772</sup> Both these parties were openly hostile towards the Community and Greek membership of a supranational organisation. Additionally, Greece held its first European election on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1981. The election results mirrored the general election with PASOK winning ten seats, New Democracy eight, and the Communist Party three. The remaining three seats were won by smaller parties, each with one seat.<sup>773</sup> The result again demonstrated the opportunity European elections provided for smaller parties. Winning European Parliament seats gave these parties legitimacy and

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<sup>771</sup> TNA, PREM 19/236, MT response to meeting Greek PM, 2 October 1980.

<sup>772</sup> K. Lavdas, *The Europeanization of Greece: Interest Politics and the Crises of Integration*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p.166.

<sup>773</sup> Eurobarometer, Greek European Election results, 20 October 1981.

financial support, providing them with a base to build upon which subsequently gave them a voice in national parliaments.

Many expected that the PASOK members would eventually join the Socialist grouping while the New Democracy members would join the EPP. One of the reasons that the Christian Democrats had re-branded itself as the EPP was to appeal more broadly to other right-wing parties that would eventually join the Community, a policy they adopted in response to the increase in Socialist numbers.<sup>774</sup> The EDG remained relatively small. Moreover, it was increasingly seen as a predominantly British grouping that did not appeal to other European nations, despite its Danish members. There were also wider Conservative fears that Greece, with its relatively unstable economy and political system, would prove to be a burden on the Community. Certain German EPP and British EDG members were united on this front, albeit in a minority, and both floated the idea of a two-tier European Community with developing Southern European states in one tier and developed states in another.<sup>775</sup>

The August 1982 European Council meeting explored the British government's view on enlargement. Thatcher stated that the government adopted the European Parliament's resolution in support of Spanish and Portuguese accession and hoped that negotiations would be concluded swiftly. But Britain would have concerns over how future negotiations for enlargement should be conducted. The Conservatives wanted more emphasis on a transitional arrangement.<sup>776</sup> They felt it would assist in preventing sharp changes occurring in the Community that would affect all member states. Accession negotiations had centred on these matters on two previous occasions. The Conservatives feared that future enlargement would potentially increase Britain's budget contribution to the Community.<sup>777</sup> Negotiations for the

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<sup>774</sup> B. Nelsen and L. Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union*, p.308.

<sup>775</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 7 October 1981.

<sup>776</sup> CCA, THCR, 3.2.98, EC: MT letter to Thorn, 5 August 1982.

<sup>777</sup> Ibid.

accession of Spain and Portugal had raised some concerns in respect of the cost of agriculture and the effect future enlargement would have on Britain's budget contribution. These were concerns also raised in the European Parliament by MEPs. However, they also reiterated the political and institutional problems the Community would face with enlargement. EDG members, along with other MEPs, stated that it was essential for the Community to strengthen its internal cohesion. The British Conservative government and its MEPs were wary of the speed in which enlargement could occur; however, the Community in a Cold War world wanted to enlarge and safeguard Europe from Communist expansion.

Some MEPs felt that the internal effects of enlargement on the Community could be managed through stricter adherence to common policies and the clarification of institutional decision-making.<sup>778</sup> The accession of two more nations would increase the European Parliament's size. It was paramount that the EDG gain members from this round of enlargement, for reasons similar to those given on Greek accession: it would show it as a more diverse grouping and provide them with more influence in the European Parliament. Moreover, a larger and more diverse grouping would entitle the grouping to more financial incentives through Community funds. However, Conservatives in Westminster were concerned about the economic cost of enlargement. Conservative MEPs at the time felt, however, that Greek accession was inevitable and thus wanted to capitalise on the opportunity to expand the EDG.<sup>779</sup> They raised matters such as the effect Spanish industry would have on British textile industries.<sup>780</sup> Moreover, Britain like Denmark had reservations over the impact Spanish accession would have on the common fisheries policy. Both nations suggested that this would be a matter raised during negotiations.

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<sup>778</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, D, Lord Interim report of political committee for Spanish accession, 4 October 1982.

<sup>779</sup> Michael Welsh Diary entry, 5 July 1981.

<sup>780</sup> CCA, THCR, 3.2.98, EC: Cost of Southern Enlargement, 12 December 1982.

Mediterranean enlargement was almost complete as the Treaty of Accession for Spain and Portugal was set to occur on 1 January 1985. It concluded a lengthy round of negotiations and would also change the dynamics of the Community, as observed by Manuel and Royo.<sup>781</sup> Furthermore, David Clark stated that ‘it marked the start of a shift of emphasis in the Community towards the South which was consolidated by the Iberian enlargement’.<sup>782</sup> EDG members placed great stress on the Conservative Party at Westminster to persuade some MEPs from both countries to join the EDG rather than the EPP or the Liberal grouping.<sup>783</sup> Efforts were made to build relations with right-wing parties in both nations. The Conservatives were particularly successful with the People’s Alliance, the major right-wing party in Spain. Fortunately for the EDG, it seemed that its MEPs would join the EDG. The People’s Alliance was led by Manuel Farga who had been a Minister under Francisco Franco. The Spaniards would eventually have to join the EDG, as Farga with his Franco past ‘was not accepted by the EPP’.<sup>784</sup> Though some MEPs did not want Spanish members as they felt this might represent a move too far right for the grouping.<sup>785</sup> There were potentially fifteen members that could join the EDG.<sup>786</sup> The EDG would also benefit financially from the inclusion of the Spanish MEPs as it would gain a further £10,000 per member from the Community and greatly increase the reputation of the EDG as a larger and more diverse grouping.<sup>787</sup> The aim of the EDG was to be an alternative centre-right grouping to the EPP and with Spanish MEPs this could be achieved. Some EDG members feared this was a move too far to the right, however, even with the addition of fifteen Spanish MEPs, the majority of the grouping were either British or Danish (64 MEPs).

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<sup>781</sup> S. Royo and P. Manuel, *Spain and Portugal in the European Union*, (London: Frank Cass, 2005).

<sup>782</sup> D. Clarke, *The Enlargement and Integration of the European Union: Issues and Strategies*, (New York: Routledge, 2014) p.61.

<sup>783</sup> Author interview with Michael Welsh, 11 November 2016.

<sup>784</sup> Ibid.

<sup>785</sup> Ibid.

<sup>786</sup> This would mean that there would be 45 British, fifteen Spanish, four Danes, and a Ulster Unionist members in the EDG.

<sup>787</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

The Spaniards were also supported to join by Plumb personally, as he had longstanding relationships with Spanish MEPs, which proved vital. The People's Alliance was very close to joining the EPP in 3 June 1984, negotiating with them on the same day as with the EDG.<sup>788</sup> It narrowly decided on the EDG largely because Plumb held pre-existing relations with the Spanish MEPs. Additionally, many of the EPP members were unwilling to readily accept the People's Alliance due to its reputation as a far-right party. For the EDG, a strong Spanish contingent meant the argument that the EDG was a British lobby. Plumb stated that the People's Alliance joining was a 'historic day for Conservatism in Europe'.<sup>789</sup> But making the EDG more diverse meant that the Conservative Party at Westminster had less control over EDG matters. Moreover, with fifteen Spanish MEPs the internal workings of the grouping would also change. The British Conservative MEPs would now have to liaise with their Spanish counterparts regarding the future of the grouping.

The EDG's actions show how important a diverse grouping was in the European Parliament, a point highlighted by Simon Hix, who emphasises how important expansion was to both the EPP and the Socialist grouping with Iberian enlargement.<sup>790</sup> Tapio Raunio, agrees with Hix but states that it was the Liberals and the Socialists groupings who specifically benefited from Iberian enlargement.<sup>791</sup> Yet neither Hix nor Raunio discuss in detail how the EDG was also able to expand, which this chapter has been able to examine in greater detail due to new archival material and interviews with former MEPs. Additionally, despite the enlargement of the EDG, they were still at a disadvantage as the Socialists expanded, taking MEPs from the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (the grouping 135 seats in 1985). Moreover, Portuguese MEPs could also join the EPP, once more limiting the EDG's influence. But the inclusion of

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<sup>788</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner, 18 October 2016.

<sup>789</sup> I. Murray, 'Tory MEPs to link with Spain right', *The Times*, 3 May 1985.

<sup>790</sup> S. Hix, A. Noury, and G. Roland, *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.32-54.

<sup>791</sup> T. Raunio, *The European Perspective: Transitional Party Groups in the 1989-1994 European Parliament*, (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 1997), p.62.

Spanish MEPs in the EDG was the first ever enlargement of the grouping and was a major achievement under Plumb's chairmanship. Yet the failure to retain the Spanish MEPs led to the ultimate demise of the EDG.

### Powers of the European Parliament

The following section will explore the powers of the European Parliament. Many MEPs had grown frustrated as, since direct elections, the European Parliament's powers had not increased. This section will show that the inability for the European Parliament to decide on a permanent seat damaged the institution's credibility in the eyes of both Westminster MPs and the wider British public. It will also demonstrate how the European Parliament tried to develop its role through scrutinising the European Council and through the publication of the Spinelli report. Additionally, it will examine the work of EDG MEPs Christopher Prout, Ben Patterson and Pete Price and the important work they did in defining the powers of the European Parliament. Their contributions in defining these powers led to the European Parliament gaining its first real power since direct elections which was the power to delay transactions, amendments and proposals.

As seen earlier in this chapter, the European Parliament was more efficient and better prepared for enlargement than other Community institutions. The MEPs of various nations felt that the EP should be given more responsibilities. Increasing the European Parliament's powers had been an overarching objective for MEPs throughout the 1970s, as seen in chapter one. In 1980 MEPs wanted to be consulted on the appointment of the President of the Commission, an effort predominantly led by the Dutch.<sup>792</sup> The matter surfaced at the end of Roy Jenkins's presidency. Moreover, with direct elections being successfully carried out in the previous year, MEPs felt that the European Parliament was a legitimised Community

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<sup>792</sup> TNA, PREM, 19/273, European Council Prep by FCO, 28 April 1980.

institution. These issues were again discussed at a European Council meeting held in April 1980. Lord Carrington and Thatcher both agreed that a strong independent president was needed, although a definite choice was not urgently required.<sup>793</sup> Names for potential candidates had been suggested, including those from Denmark, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg.

The Conservative government was firmly committed to the notion that a president should be appointed six months prior to taking office. The FCO proposed that the default position should be the guidance given in the treaties, which gave the European Parliament no say in the presidency selection procedure.<sup>794</sup> It asserted that the European Parliament would still be able to hold the European Commission accountable through its power to dismiss the European Commission. The EDG remained in line with government policy on the matter, and this was also supported by France and Germany.<sup>795</sup> However, no further progress was made in 1980, despite strong support from the Netherlands and the other Benelux states. Again, this shows that despite European Parliament matters at times falling out of the remit of the overall European policy for the British government, it was still an institution they had to address.

The Benelux states had created further tensions because of the site of the European Parliament. Since direct elections, MEPs had also grown frustrated by to the amount of travel involved.<sup>796</sup> British MEPs had taken the lead and wanted a decision urgently. They frequently raised the matter and reiterated how it added ten per cent to the European Parliament's budget annually.<sup>797</sup> In November 1980 the situation intensified as MEPs passed a resolution which gave member states until June 1981 to conclude the matter. France, Luxembourg and Belgium were the states most concerned with the site of the European Parliament. France

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<sup>793</sup> TNA, PREM, 19/753, European Council European Parliament president selection, 30 April 1980.

<sup>794</sup> Ibid.

<sup>795</sup> TNA, PREM, 19/273, European Council Prep by FCO, 28 April 1980.

<sup>796</sup> TNA, T/449, EC Monetary Committee meeting, 17 May 1980.

<sup>797</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 5 March 1980.

wanted to ease tensions amongst MEPs by declaring Strasbourg, Luxembourg and Brussels as the parliamentary, financial and judicial, and executive capitals of the Community, respectively.<sup>798</sup> Luxembourg wanted to keep its share of the European Parliament as it benefited economically from hosting the Secretariat. Belgium had remained more reserved, hoping that maintaining the status quo would ensure a decision that would favour Brussels. It was supported by the fact that both Denmark and the Netherlands had expressed vague interest in the site being in Brussels.<sup>799</sup> However, both nations also raised questions with France about the cost of a permanent building and the need to consult the European Parliament prior to any final decision.<sup>800</sup> Greece and Italy clearly supported the site being in Brussels as it had better communications. Britain also favoured Brussels but did not want to be seen as confrontational and so avoided taking any initiative on the matter.<sup>801</sup> It was because of France, Belgium and Luxemburg that the decision on the site of an European Parliament was consistently delayed, this turned into a sensitive topic as hosting the European Parliament brought financial incentives. However, the inability of the European Parliament to decide on a seat damaged its credibility.

Britain agreed with the Netherlands that the European Parliament should be consulted prior to a final decision as it would appease British MEPs and would prevent relations between the Council and European Parliament worsening. Ensuring the European Parliament was consulted would also delay a decision and increase pressure on France to opt for Brussels. The site of the European Parliament demonstrates that the Conservatives wanted to avoid tensions within the Community on this issue, which differs from other matters, such as the CAP and budget contribution, despite British Conservative MEPs wanting a decision to be taken. Again, it shows that the European Parliament was only a small aspect of the overall

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<sup>798</sup> TNA, PREM 19/221, Cabinet Office letter to Number Ten, 28 November 1980.

<sup>799</sup> Ibid.

<sup>800</sup> Ibid.

<sup>801</sup> Ibid.



British European policy, which led to some MEPs becoming disillusioned with the Conservative government. Moreover, the divisions on the site of the European Parliament were sensitive for member states such as France, Belgium and Luxembourg as there were financial benefits for housing the European Parliament.

Another concern for the European Council and the European Parliament in 1981 was the debate on whether or not the president of the European Council should report to the European Parliament on matters discussed at European Council meetings. French President Giscard d'Estaing opposed this, believing that, as he was not required to report back on European Council meetings to the French Parliament, neither was there need for him to appear before the European Parliament.<sup>802</sup> He initially prevented an agreement being made in 1981. Belgium had remained neutral stating that if the Community agreed to go before the European Parliament it would have no objections.<sup>803</sup> Ben Soetendorp has argued that the Netherlands traditionally wanted to make the European Parliament a more powerful institution, as it felt the Council of Ministers benefited larger countries disproportionately and that the European Parliament could offer a counterbalance.<sup>804</sup> So, unsurprisingly, the Netherlands opposed France. Moreover, it exacerbated the situation, particularly for Britain, by suggesting that as Britain assumed presidency of the European Council in 1981 one of its initial acts should be to ensure the proposal was passed. It was a concern for the Conservatives as they were to remain neutral. Eventually, Thatcher and Scott-Hopkins agreed to the Netherlands' demands because they did not want Britain to be viewed as a confrontational nation, again demonstrating Thatcher's pragmatism regarding European Parliament matters. The Conservatives wanted to focus on the most important issues for Britain, which were CAP reform and Britain's budget contribution.

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<sup>802</sup> TNA, PREM 19/465, FCO letter to number ten attendance to European Parliament, 2 March 1981.

<sup>803</sup> Ibid.

<sup>804</sup> R. Soetendorp, *Foreign Policy in the European Union* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), p.35.

However, due to the statement made by the Dutch Prime Minister, Thatcher was forced to decide, which was made somewhat easier as Giscard d'Estaing became less vocal and French opposition eventually disappeared. It meant that if Britain were to oppose the proposal in 1981 it would have no support from other nations. David Hannay had stated that the relationship between the Council and Parliament was poor, and he did not want the UK presidency 'to be marred by a row with the Parliament'.<sup>805</sup> Eventually, it was agreed by the Conservative government. The decision would also allow Conservative MPs to work more closely with Conservative MEPs, as well as providing leadership and direction to the MEPs thus improving their morale and communication which had been a problem since Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1979. Thatcher stated that she would not be able to address the Council until the next European Council meeting in 1981 due to various domestic commitments.<sup>806</sup> Moreover, this meeting would allow Thatcher to develop and push her thoughts on CAP reform and Britain's budget contribution, which were both vital issues to her, unlike other aspects of the Community.

Furthermore, since 1979 the Conservative MEPs had greatly contributed to the powers of the European Parliament, such as the contribution made on the Rules Committee. The Conservative MEPs on this committee since 1979 were Peter Price, Ben Patterson and Christopher Prout.<sup>807</sup> They were extremely active in publishing reports on the powers the European Parliament should have in amending proposed bills. There was much work to do on the Committee as they had inherited the rules of the previous unelected European Parliament. The number of MEPs had increased from 198 to 418 and, with enlargement, it was clear that this committee would have to continue its work in defining a role for the European

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<sup>805</sup> TNA, PREM 19/465, FCO letter to number ten attendance to European Parliament, 2 March 1981.

<sup>806</sup> Ibid. It is worth noting at this particular juncture the CRD documents did not touch on the site of the European Parliament or if the President of the European Council should report to the European Parliament. Again, demonstrating that the European Parliament was a small aspect of the Conservatives European policy but also showing that the absence of documents was a deliberate decision to steer away from a divisive topic which could impact relations with France, Belgium and Luxembourg.

<sup>807</sup> CCA, THCR 2.7.4.17, List of MEP Committees, 19 May 1984.

Parliament.<sup>808</sup> Moreover, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office took great interest and liaised with Prout on the powers of the European Parliament throughout the period between 1979 and 1985.<sup>809</sup> Prout used this interest to build relations with Foreign and Commonwealth Office civil servants and Lord Carrington. He also used his influence to ensure the Foreign and Commonwealth Office examined other European Parliament committees.<sup>810</sup> Hence, Christopher Prout contributed greatly to the development of the European Parliament and was ‘one of the architects that increased its powers’.<sup>811</sup> As a result he also had strong relationships with senior Conservative MPs at Westminster. Prout was the first person to suggest that the European Parliament committees should delay making their decisions in committee.<sup>812</sup> By doing so it forced the Commission to attend meetings or engage with the European Parliament.<sup>813</sup> Through this, the committee could identify why its position was being overruled and the source/origin of opposition. Thus, it could adopt the resolution or address the opposition in committee. The Conservatives, and Prout in particular, were very important in the period from 1979 to 1984 in developing the European Parliament. Prout's work on the Rules Committee marked a success for the EDG as one of the grouping's objectives since 1973 was to make the European Parliament a legitimate institution. In defining the powers of the European Parliament, Prout gave it the ability to delay the Community budget, transactions, amendments and proposals. Delaying Community business could have serious repercussions as will be seen with the British rebate. Matters regarding the rebate overshadowed Prout's achievement which is reflected in the limited literature that discusses

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<sup>808</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner, 18 October 2016.

<sup>809</sup> TNA, FCO 30/4947, Relations between the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee, 1981. In the period from 1979-84 Lord Carrington, Francis Pym and Geoffrey Howe had been the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

<sup>810</sup> Ibid.

<sup>811</sup> Author interview with Michael Welsh, 11 November 2016.

<sup>812</sup> Mainly decisions were either opinions, or amendments to reports that were suggested by the Commission. For more on the different types of procedures of the European Parliament see R. Corbett, pp.92-124.

<sup>813</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner, 18 October 2016.

the EDG in this period.<sup>814</sup> Furthermore, Prout's ability to build relations with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office made him one of the few MEPs who was able to effectively communicate with Westminster. Prout's work did not go unnoticed as he would eventually become the grouping's leader in 1987.<sup>815</sup>

At a time when Britain's budget contribution was being scrutinised, the CAP potentially being reformed, and the productivity of the Community increasing, some MEPs were frustrated with their limited influence in Community affairs. Many felt that as the only democratically elected body in the Community they should be given a bigger role. The Italian MEP Altiero Spinelli greatly contributed to this debate. Spinelli was a Communist, who had been detained by the fascist regime in 1927. During his incarceration he converted to federalism and would in 1941 write (under the influence of British literature produced by the Federal Union) with fellow prisoner Ernesto Rossi the *Ventotene Manifesto*.<sup>816</sup> The manifesto called for a democratic European federation, in order to prevent further wars in Europe.

In February 1984 Spinelli urged the European Parliament to approve a draft treaty that he and fifteen other rapporteurs had written. This draft was written in an attempt to constitutionalise the Community, and provide clarity during a time of Eurosclerosis.<sup>817</sup> Robert Salais has argued that many of the issues addressed in the report would later come into effect in the various treaty ratifications in future years.<sup>818</sup> Glencross and Treschel have provided a detailed study of the importance of Spinelli's earlier work which his 1984 report builds upon.<sup>819</sup> The

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<sup>814</sup> T. Jensen, *The European People's Party* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp.54-89. B. Heuser and C. Buffet, eds, *Haunted by History: Myths in International Relations*, (Oxford: Berghahn, 1998).

<sup>815</sup> Prout by 1997 would become the Shadow Lord Chancellor, see British Library Newspaper Archive, *The Times*, 'Lord Kingsland', 14th July 2009.

<sup>816</sup> For more on Spinelli see A. Glencross and A. Trechsel, eds, *EU Federalism and Constitutionalism: The Legacy of Altiero Spinelli* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010).

<sup>817</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Spinelli report, 10 February 1984. The report also proposed a strong co-decision procedure for policymaking. The procedure would later be adopted in the Maastricht Treaty (1992).

<sup>818</sup> R. Salais, 'Europe, Laboratory for A-Democracy', *Historical Social Research*, 40.1 (2015), 185-99.

<sup>819</sup> A. Glencross and A. Trechsel, eds, *EU Federalism and Constitutionalism: The Legacy of Altiero Spinelli* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010).

Spinelli report was the first to clearly mention freedom of movement in Europe. It also suggested that a form of the Luxembourg Compromise remain for a transitional ten-year period and be eventually replaced by majority voting.<sup>820</sup> The report can be seen as an attempt to resolve chronic economic difficulties through political means, namely deeper integration. However, the report did not signal a change in policy but was instead a difference in its presentation and tone that reflected the frustrations of MEPs such as Spinelli. The Conservative Party at Westminster was sceptical of the report as it was a clear commitment to deeper integration and a step towards federalism, which was strongly opposed. Harvey Proctor (Conservative MP for Billericay) stated that the 'British Government do not support any further loss of sovereignty, as would be initiated by acceptance of the Spinelli report'.<sup>821</sup> Yet the EDG, and Plumb in particular, was supportive of aspects of the report, Plumb stating that 'the EDG welcomed an open discussion on how to improve the Community'.<sup>822</sup> He did, however, emphasise that only certain aspects of the report were supported by the EDG. Regardless, the report demonstrates some disparity between Continental MEPs and British MEPs over the future direction of the Community.

Overall, enlargement and direct elections meant that the Community's dynamics would inevitably change, yet despite this the Community stagnated between 1979 and 1984. Juliet Lodge shows that the European Parliament wanted more influence because it had successfully carried out direct elections in 1979 and wanted more responsibilities.<sup>823</sup> Yet, accounts such as Desmond Dinan's argue that it was not until after 1986 that the European Parliament gained influence due to treaty reform via the Single European Act and eventually

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<sup>820</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Spinelli report, 10 February 1984.

<sup>821</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 62 cc988-9, 27 June 1984.

<sup>822</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament plenary session, 8 March 1984.

<sup>823</sup> J. Lodge and V. Herman, pp.130-150.

the Maastricht treaty.<sup>824</sup> Helen Wallace points specifically towards the SEA as being the catalyst for the European Parliament becoming more established.<sup>825</sup> Yet this chapter has shown that British Conservative MEPs consistently worked to make the European Parliament more effective even in the period from 1979 to 1984, as seen with the work of the Rules Committee and Prout. Additionally, the Spinelli report demonstrated the frustrations of MEPs who wanted to see the Community develop, and which would lead to a stronger European Parliament. The Spinelli and Vedel reports did not have an immediate impact on the Community, but their legacy would be seen in future treaty ratifications which illustrates their long-term importance.

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<sup>824</sup> D. Dinan, *Origins and Evaluation of the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.305-327.

<sup>825</sup> H. Wallace and W. Wallace, *Policy-Making in the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.52-71.

## Chapter Seven: The MEPs role in Britain's Budget Contribution

The following chapter will explore Britain's rebate which was settled in 1984. It was a central part of the Conservative government's European policy in which the European Parliament played a significant role. The chapter will demonstrate the contributions the EDG made to the Conservative government's policy and how the European Parliament's growing influence allowed it to delay the rebate. In particular, the chapter will focus on the communication between the EDG and Westminster since the budget was an example where there were clearer communications between the two parliaments. Communication on the budget was stronger for two reasons: firstly, because the rebate was a central part of Thatcher's overall European Policy; and secondly, because Christopher Jackson, the MEP who worked on the Budget Committee, and Scott-Hopkins were both able to effectively build relations with Thatcher, Conservative MPs, and civil servants. It shows that MEPs who worked on committees that were central to British interests were able to build stronger relations in Westminster. The chapter will also show the important role the MEPs played in the rebate.

The 1980s began with the Conservative Party led by Thatcher wanting to resolve Britain's budget contribution to the Community, a fundamental objective for the Conservative government. Kevin Hickson has argued that Thatcher felt Britain paid too much and that the matter dominated her earlier tenure.<sup>826</sup> For British EDG members the budget contribution was linked to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). But in 1980 little progress was made because of the approaching elections in France and Germany (set for 1981). It meant that Thatcher did not press the matter strongly in 1980 despite MEPs being keen to work on restructuring the budget. As seen previously, Scott-Hopkins had considered withholding British payments in order to support Thatcher. If the Conservative MEPs rejected the Community

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<sup>826</sup> K. Hickson, ed., *The Political Thought of the Conservative Party since 1945*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.122.

budget in 1980 nearly 40 per cent of its funds would be affected.<sup>827</sup> Fortunately, the EDG had eight million Belgian Francs in reserve which would allow them to function without support from the Community for an interim period. Scott-Hopkins sought clarity from Westminster through a series of correspondences with Thatcher.<sup>828</sup> He suggested that the European Parliament would reject the budget the Commission proposed, arguing that too much of it was devoted to the CAP.<sup>829</sup> MEPs were willing to support the EDG in lobbying for CAP reform, however, opposition came from France as it was the largest benefactor of the CAP.<sup>830</sup> France led matters and were supported by Ireland and Denmark. Communication between MEPs and Westminster was becoming a reoccurring reason why MEPs struggled to build effective relationships with Westminster. Yet it can be seen MEPs collaborated with Whitehall officials, and had a better relationship with Thatcher than has been appreciated. Consequently, Conservative MEPs represented both effective diplomatic and political levers in the British pursuit of the final resolution for the rebate.

Thatcher insisted that she sought a satisfactory agreement on Britain's budget contribution.<sup>831</sup> However, she opposed withholding Britain's payments despite Scott-Hopkins warning it was the only real power Britain held.<sup>832</sup> Thus, in May 1980, Thatcher made an enquiry to the Treasury about the procedure of withholding payments. Treasury officials consulted Christopher Jackson and they both worked to explain that if Britain intended to withhold payments, necessary legislation would have to be put in place to ensure no ensuing legal matters would arise,<sup>833</sup> again showing that some MEPs could work effectively with the Conservative government and Whitehall departments. Regardless, there were fears that withholding funds would be met by opposition from Conservative MEPs, such as Henry

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<sup>827</sup> TNA, PREM 19/223 Thatcher and Scott-Hopkins Correspondence, 5 February 1980.

<sup>828</sup> Ibid, PREM 19/223 French MEPs and EDG, 17 January 1980.

<sup>829</sup> Ibid.

<sup>830</sup> See introduction.

<sup>831</sup> TNA, PREM 19/223 Thatcher and Scott-Hopkins Correspondence, 5 February 1980.

<sup>832</sup> Ibid.

<sup>833</sup> CCA, THCR 1.8.5. Europe: Treasury note for MT (EEC Budget: Withholding), 29 May 1980.



Plumb or Alexander Sherlock.<sup>834</sup> Plumb had served as the president of the National Farmers Union (NFU) prior to direct elections and was the chairman of the Agricultural Committee of the European Parliament on 1980.<sup>835</sup> Continental Europeans who supported the CAP felt that, due to his background, Plumb was more sympathetic towards the CAP than his British counterparts.<sup>836</sup> Pierre Méhaignerie, the French Minister of Agriculture, had even wanted to negotiate the CAP specifically with Plumb. Moreover, in 1980 the French Prime Minister Raymond Barre invited Plumb to meet with him.<sup>837</sup> Plumb's background and views had caused some anxiety amongst Conservatives as they felt France was attempting to align Plumb with them on CAP matters and, ultimately, on Britain's budget contribution.<sup>838</sup> However, little came of the discussions between French officials and Plumb. Moreover, most MEPs were willing to support Thatcher in securing a rebate despite some who opposed withholding payments, which highlights that MEPs and Thatcher were able to collaboratively work together.

The CAP and budget contribution were linked and were both sensitive issues that Thatcher was keen to resolve. Yet John Turner explains that Thatcher was not willing to strike a deal on Britain's budget contribution through accepting the CAP.<sup>839</sup> Scott-Hopkins again worked with Thatcher and ensured that the European Parliament would block a budget increase of over 3.5 per cent.<sup>840</sup> Thatcher clearly stated that Britain could not accept too large a price increase as it would cancel out gains made in the budget. Overall, the budget could not be fixed until matters around the CAP were decided. Scott-Hopkins and Christopher Jackson worked with Thatcher to achieve this goal. Scott-Hopkins raised these concerns because they

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<sup>834</sup> See chapter six.

<sup>835</sup> TNA, PREM, 19/216, Note on meeting with Sir Henry Plumb, 20 March 1980.

<sup>836</sup> Ibid. His background as the head of the NFU had allowed him to build strong relations with Continental European MEPs.

<sup>837</sup> Ibid.

<sup>838</sup> Ibid, Record of conversation (Walker-European Parliament Chairman of the Agriculture and Food Committee, Henry Plumb), 21 March 1980.

<sup>839</sup> J. Turner, *The Tories and Europe*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p.94.

<sup>840</sup> TNA, PREM, 19/216, Scott-Hopkins letter to Thatcher, 20 March 1980.

affected the EDG budget, as the EDG could only function until mid-summer of the following year if Britain withheld payments. Scott-Hopkins's and Christopher Jackson's contributions in 1980 show that there was better communication between MEPs and Westminster on this specific matter as the budget rebate was a central policy to Thatcher. Moreover, both MEPs had better relationships with senior Ministers and Thatcher. The work of Jackson and Scott-Hopkins shows that MEPs also had a role in the rebate being both effective political and diplomatic levers in ensuring that the rebate would be delivered.

At the 1981 Luxembourg European Council meeting both the CAP and Britain's budget contribution would be discussed. In the meeting it was agreed that further steps would be taken to ensure that reforms for the CAP would be considered as would Britain's budget contribution.<sup>841</sup> Upon reflection, Thatcher would later state she was defending British interests and that the member states were 'un-English' in negotiation.<sup>842</sup> The view that Thatcher took a patriotic stance against the Community is shared by other writers such as Shirley Letwin and Patrick Cosgrave.<sup>843</sup> A decision was taken because Europe's economies were struggling, with member states impacted by high unemployment and inflation. Moreover, with the US and Japan advancing economically it became clearer that France and Germany wanted further integration which Britain would not support unless the CAP and budget issues were resolved. If these were not addressed, the Community could weaken, as had happened during the OPEC crisis when member states sought bilateral agreements.<sup>844</sup> Larry Neal has observed that the Community saw political reform as a way to combat economic difficulties.<sup>845</sup> Hence France and Germany went into the European Council meeting

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<sup>841</sup> TNA, PREM 19/737, EC Luxembourg European Council Meeting, 30 June 1981.

<sup>842</sup> M. Thatcher, *Downing Street*, (London: HarperCollins, 1993), p. 81.

<sup>843</sup> See S. Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* (New York: Transaction Publishers, 1993), p. 154. Or P. Cosgrave, *Thatcher: the First Term*, (London: Vintage Publishing 1985), pp.27-60.

<sup>844</sup> See chapter one.

<sup>845</sup> L. Neal, *The Economics of Europe and the European Union*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p.201.

willing to reach a compromise with Britain.<sup>846</sup> The means to achieve CAP reform were not defined in the meeting and were left deliberately vague. It was merely concluded that reforms would be made in economic, regional, and social policies.<sup>847</sup> The vague goal set at Council meetings was a characteristic of the European Council in the 1980s, in contrast to the 1970s. It was partially because of problems member states faced with direct elections in the previous decade. European Council meetings at that time decided to set strict goals and deadlines which inevitably had to be pushed back, as seen previously regarding direct elections. Thus, CAP reform dates and aims were left broad to maintain credibility of the Community.

The Conservative Party, including the MEPs, were in agreement. Scott-Hopkins, amongst others, was keen to resolve the CAP, stating in the European Parliament that it was vital that ‘an agreement over the CAP be reached’.<sup>848</sup> However, the budget was more complex since the European Parliament held budgetary powers. Moreover, if a reduction was to occur in the budget it would impact MEPs directly, but they nevertheless continued to support the government on a rebate. Furthermore, Britain feared that the future accessions of Mediterranean members would lead to an increase in regional and social funds to help Southern member states, particularly if the CAP was to be reformed which was not beneficial to countries like Britain and Germany.<sup>849</sup> It was also emphasised by the Commission at this meeting that ‘the Commission believes that Europe cannot make a new start until it puts its house in order – in other words until it solves the budget problems.’<sup>850</sup> It can be seen, therefore, that Conservative European concerns were being addressed at this meeting. The Community was willing to listen to Britain but wanted a commitment to deeper integration in return. The budget reform would aid the British economic recovery, but also shows

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<sup>846</sup> As seen on p.161 Delors wanted to quickly develop the Community.

<sup>847</sup> TNA, PREM 19/737, EC Luxembourg European Council Meeting, 30 June 1981.

<sup>848</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 12 January 1981.

<sup>849</sup> J.W.Young, p.154. Also see, L. Neal, pp 189-215

<sup>850</sup> TNA, PREM 19/737, EC Luxembourg European Council Meeting, 30 June 1981.

Conservative MEPs being valuable to the government as Conservative MPs and MEPs worked together on a central topic.

In 1982 the Council of Ministers came to another confrontation with the European Parliament over the Community budget. The Parliament adopted a budget that was substantially larger than the one the Council had approved. The European Parliament did so because it required a larger sum in order to function. Following Greek accession, the European Parliament had more MEPs and its expenditure had increased. The European Parliament thus adopted a new budget without seeking the approval of the Council.<sup>851</sup> The Conservative government was asked by fellow member states to urgently outline Britain's position as the Commission had already decided to implement the budget, which in turn meant that if member states did not make their payments on time the Commission could take them to the European Court of Justice. The Lord Privy Seal Humphrey Atkins outlined the potential action Britain could take.<sup>852</sup> The Conservatives, like other member states (which included Germany and Italy), felt the European Parliament's actions were illegal.

Belgium held the presidency of the Council of the European Union during this time. It proposed that a compromise could be reached that would unify the Council. The proposal required member states to pay in full and on time. In return, the Council would then take the matter to the European Court to decide the legal validity of the European Parliament's actions.<sup>853</sup> Simultaneously, the Council would open discussions that could lead to an agreement being made with the European Parliament.<sup>854</sup> Christopher Jackson was again consulted on the matter by the Conservative government. He observed that 'the advantage of

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<sup>851</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 12 January 1982.

<sup>852</sup> TNA, PREM 19/737, Atkins minutes to MT: 1982 Community Budget, 28 January 1982, Britain paid approximately £2.5 million a month, and therefore this was a serious matter that needed considering.

<sup>853</sup> Ibid.

<sup>854</sup> Ibid.

paying in full was that Britain could be seen as a tolerant member state'.<sup>855</sup> Moreover, it would persuade other member states to do likewise. Another option Christopher Jackson presented was that Britain could pay only the part it deemed legal.<sup>856</sup> However, this would mean the Commission would take Britain to court which could lead to a fine as well as forcing Britain to pay the full amount. Atkins argued that Britain should pay the full amount as this would make a stronger case when it came to resolving the overall budget issue for Britain.<sup>857</sup> By 1982 these discussions were making progressing. EDG members were also supportive of Atkins's view.<sup>858</sup> Scott-Hopkins reiterated that if payments were withheld, the EDG could function for a short period of time without the budget being settled.<sup>859</sup> The EDG felt that the European Parliament's actions were illegal, and supported Thatcher on withholding the full amount.<sup>860</sup> However, the Chancellor of the Exchequer Geoffrey Howe disagreed with Atkins, stating that the European Parliament's actions were illegal. He felt that Britain alone had a strong enough case to go before the European Court, and a satisfactory decision could be reached.<sup>861</sup> Hence the two potential solutions were either to pay in full or to pay the part deemed legal. The British government was prepared to pay the full amount on the condition that other member states agreed to cooperate in a joint Council action against both the European Parliament and the Commission.<sup>862</sup> Again, this episode shows how the Conservative Cabinet worked cohesively with Conservative MEPs on certain matters. The fact that a decision had to be reached quickly diffused the matter. It also illustrated the European Parliament's growing influence in the Community as, in the interim, it was able to secure a desired budget without the Council's approval.

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<sup>855</sup> Ibid. Christopher Jackson correspondence to Number Ten and Treasury Officials, 28 January 1982.

<sup>856</sup> Ibid, Number 10 letter to Lord Privy Seal's Office, 29 January 1982.

<sup>857</sup> Ibid, Atkins minutes to MT: 1982 Community Budget, 28 January 1982.

<sup>858</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 12 January 1982.

<sup>859</sup> Ibid, Scott-Hopkins letter to MT, 21 January 1982.

<sup>860</sup> Ibid, EDG EEC Community budget report, 19 February 1982.

<sup>861</sup> G. Howe, *Conflict in Loyalty*, (London: Macmillian, 1994), p.252.

<sup>862</sup> Ibid.

Throughout 1982 the Conservatives lobbied to secure an arrangement that would allow the Community to pay rebates to Britain. Thatcher had stated that she wanted Britain's 'money back'.<sup>863</sup> Britain was one of the largest contributors to the Community's budget but did not benefit greatly from the Community. As seen in Stephen George's account, the Community's budget was geared towards spending on agriculture rather than industry, benefiting France, principally.<sup>864</sup> Hence, France opposed the rebate or reassessment of how Community spending should occur. Yet EDG members had worked to ensure an agreement was made within the European Parliament to approve the rebate. The method by which payment was meant to occur was through a supplementary budget that would be added to the European Parliament budget. The supplementary budget would then be used to make payments to Britain. However, throughout 1982 MEPs of other countries had opposed this method of payment.<sup>865</sup> As these payments would have to be made on an ad hoc basis there was no mechanism in place to make them. The newly elected president of the European Parliament Pieter Dankert was vocal on the matter. He stated that 'any potential rebate would require the full support and approval of the Parliament'.<sup>866</sup> Eventually, it meant that by the end of 1982 the European Parliament turned down the supplementary budget proposed by the Commission and therefore rebates would not be paid. The rebate would be an issue throughout the early 1980s until it was settled in 1984. Accounts such as that of Peterson and Shackleton conclude that the European Parliament had gained more influence after 1986 with the signing of the Single European Act.<sup>867</sup> However, as can be seen even prior to that and only five years after direct elections, the European Parliament had significant influence over

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<sup>863</sup> TNA, PREM 19/737, European Council Meeting Luxembourg, 1980.

<sup>864</sup> George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain and the Community*, pp.33-65.

<sup>865</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 16 November 1983.

<sup>866</sup> Ibid.

<sup>867</sup> J. Peterson and M. Shackleton, *The Institutions of the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.124-148.

the budget and the rebate showed how effectively the European Parliament could use its influence as early as 1982.

The Conservative government had wanted a rebate of £500 million from the Community. Stephen Wall shows that the rebate was an overriding factor which determined the government's attitudes towards the Community.<sup>868</sup> In January 1983 the European Commission attempted to draft the budget proposal that included a British rebate. However, MEPs led by the European Parliament's President Pieter Dankert opposed the method for a rebate. They demanded that no special arrangements should be made to accommodate Britain's rebate, arguing that 'Community policies had to be altered repeatedly' damaging the overall workings of the Community.<sup>869</sup> Francis Pym as the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs attempted to negotiate with Pieter Dankert and the MEPs by resolving the rebate issue through pre-existing Community policies. Members of the Council of Ministers disagreed, believing that alterations to policies would have to occur before 1984 for Britain to get a rebate.<sup>870</sup> The Commission then proposed to add an additional £353 million to the budget for the next year, classified as money the European Parliament could spend. These funds would be diverted to repay Britain. In doing so, the Community would not have to alter existing policies. However, Dankert and other MEPs still opposed the suggestion, arguing that these extra funds might be used instead to bolster non-agricultural spending.<sup>871</sup> The EDG attempted to defend the Conservative government's stance by suggesting that Britain was one of the largest contributors to the Community.<sup>872</sup> These comments created tensions between the EDG and other groupings, including the Liberals and the EPP.

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<sup>868</sup>S. Wall, *A Stranger in Europe*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.10.

<sup>869</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Community Bulletin, 25 January 1983.

<sup>870</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, J. Wyles, *Financial Times*, 'MEPs take a tough line', 27 January 1983.

<sup>871</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 18 January 1983.

<sup>872</sup> Ibid.

Additionally, the Conservatives at Westminster were deeply engaged with the matter on rebates. The Chairman of the 1922 Committee Edward Du Cann (MP for Taunton) concluded that Britain should withhold its payments to the Community until the matter was resolved.<sup>873</sup> Thatcher underlined that, like the European Parliament, they wanted a solution on the rebate, although Britain would keep all its options open, including withholding future payments.<sup>874</sup> From both a British and Community perspective the matter had to be resolved quickly otherwise it could create a substantial backlog of rebates that would have to be paid to the UK. The situation was exacerbated as Britain proposed that unless repayments were made on 31 March 1983 they would withhold budget contributions.<sup>875</sup> A preliminary agreement was eventually reached between the European Parliament and the European Commission whereby the European Parliament would be willing to accept alterations to the EEC development and financial policies.<sup>876</sup> The episode demonstrates again the powers of the European Parliament as it pertained to Community finance. Moreover, the EDG and the Conservative government as a whole worked together cohesively on the rebate as the government saw the effective political and diplomatic role the EDG could play.

Both the Council of Ministers and the Commission were willing to accommodate the needs for a British rebate whereas the European Parliament was a major obstacle. Both Pym and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the West German Foreign Minister, who held the presidency of the European Council, suggested to the European Parliament that the money being added to the supplementary budget was not going to stop special one-off payments to Britain.<sup>877</sup> Dankert remained disappointed and argued he would be 'looking to other member states to add more funds to the overall budget'. He believed this was required as the workings of the Community

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<sup>873</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD/B/12/4, Debate on European Community Budget, 30 November 1983.

<sup>874</sup> Ibid.

<sup>875</sup> Ibid, Notes on European Community Budget, 5 January 1983.

<sup>876</sup> Ibid.

<sup>877</sup> TNA, HM Treasury FOI release, 13/1107, Nicholas Ridley minute, European budget issue, 24 January 1983.



were growing, partly because of enlargement.<sup>878</sup> France remained the biggest opponent of Community rebates as it wished to safeguard the CAP. It was one of the greatest benefactors of the CAP, which was integral to its overall European policy. Between the European Parliament and France, it was becoming increasingly unlikely that a settlement on a rebate would be reached before the March deadline. The EDG was also concerned: Christopher Jackson, the MEP attached to the European budget, being extremely pessimistic on the matter.<sup>879</sup> He raised his concerns with Treasury officials that if Britain withheld its payments this would be deemed an illegal act by the ECJ, which would eventually force Britain into making its payment as well as facing a fine.<sup>880</sup> Jackson was also convinced that due to pressure from MEPs in the large groupings of the EPP and Socialists, a budget rebate was unlikely to occur. Withholding would also have ramifications for the EDG, as other groupings saw them as an extension of the British Conservative government. Yet the rebate showed that Christopher Jackson was able to work with Number Ten and the Treasury on a sensitive matter, hence to an extent some MEPs were consulted and involved in Conservative government's European policies.

In late January the Conservatives agreed with Jackson's view that a rebate would not be made. In the event of withholding a payment, the Cabinet noted the importance of Britain not appearing triumphant, but rather adopting a tone of 'sorrow and disappointment'.<sup>881</sup> But the Commission and the Council eventually persuaded the European Parliament to adopt the supplementary budget. The EDG also played a role in this matter as they negotiated with some members of the EPP, Gaullists and Liberal Grouping who were working to block the supplementary budget.<sup>882</sup> The EDG as a whole negotiated with these groupings to ensure they

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<sup>878</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Plenary Session, 18 January 1983.

<sup>879</sup> Ibid.

<sup>880</sup> Ibid. Jackson to HMT budget concern 25 November 1983.

<sup>881</sup> Ibid.

<sup>882</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Community Bulletin, 18 February 1983.

voted to approve the supplementary budget, which was significant.<sup>883</sup> In the final vote in February 1983 it was approved by 183 votes to 35, with five abstentions.<sup>884</sup> The EDG had played an important role in this vote. It meant that by the end of February Britain would receive the rebate for contributions made in 1983. Even Labour MEPs defended the Conservative government. Barbara Castle had even commented that it was Thatcher's right to decide how it should be spent.<sup>885</sup> However, in July the Council of Ministers moved to block the £60 million that was being offered to Britain, a substantial portion of the rebate initially agreed. The EDG released a statement suggesting that 'the Council had plunged a dagger in the back of Britain.'<sup>886</sup> The Minister of State for Europe, Malcolm Rifkind, argued that the rebate was beginning to cause a division between Britain and other member states and an agreement for this sum was not reached in 1983. Overall, Thatcher had delivered on a preliminary agreement for a budget rebate by 1983, which was vital as had Thatcher not achieved a rebate, it would have meant a central aspect of her European policy had failed heading into a general election. Moreover, British MEPs had remained united and Conservative MEPs had followed the party line, despite some hesitation over withholding payments. Furthermore, this chapter has demonstrated how Scott-Hopkins and Christopher Jackson worked with Number Ten and Treasury officials to ensure clear communication between MEPs and MPs on the rebate. Jackson also contributed to the thinking of Westminster as he explained the problems of withholding payments. As a result, both Scott-Hopkins and Christopher Jackson worked with Number Ten and the Treasury in the instance of the rebate demonstrating that the MEPs represented both effective political and diplomatic levers. The rebate also demonstrates the difficulties the European Parliament, on a very

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<sup>883</sup> Ibid.

<sup>884</sup> Ibid.

<sup>885</sup> Ibid, European Parliament Session, 5 February 1983.

<sup>886</sup> CCA, THCR 2.11.12.7, EDG press release, 22 July 1983.

technical level, caused Britain which is not fully examined in the historiography.<sup>887</sup> The frustration the European Parliament caused during the rebate reinforced the views of some MPs who opposed the development of the European Parliament.<sup>888</sup>

Despite 1984 being a European election year, the Conservatives at Westminster continued to press the Community regarding Britain's rebate. Thatcher and other Conservative MPs felt strongly since 80 per cent of the Community budget was spent on the CAP in 1984.<sup>889</sup> The situation was exacerbated in this year as the Community was looking to increase its net resources, which led to the Conservatives pushing for a conclusion on Britain's rebate. European MEPs from other member states, however, worked to oppose Britain's rebate claim. The European Parliament had until 31 March 1984 at the latest to release £457 million from its budget to the UK which would cover Britain's rebate for the previous year.<sup>890</sup> New regulations to allow rebates to be paid were put in place. However, the MEPs decided against giving a formal opinion on these regulations.<sup>891</sup> The delay by the European Parliament meant that the Council of Ministers could not approve any regulations, which in turn meant the rebate to Britain could not be paid before the March deadline. Conservative EDG members raised this in European Parliament Question Time.<sup>892</sup> The European Parliament eventually concluded that the decision to pay Britain would be contingent on the outcome of the European Council meeting in Brussels which was set to occur in March 1984.<sup>893</sup> Mitterrand recognised the importance of a solution because it had a direct impact on France, which, like West Germany and Britain, was going to become a net contributor to the Community. Howe later commented that Mitterrand understood 'the need to grasp the nettle.'<sup>894</sup> Thus France

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<sup>887</sup> The budgetary powers of the EP are more broadly discussed in Corbett, Jacobs, and Shackleton.

<sup>888</sup> MPs views on the EP will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

<sup>889</sup> G. Howe, p.400.

<sup>890</sup> CCA, THCR 2.11.12.7, EDG press release, 22 July 1983.

<sup>891</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Bulletin, 26 February 1984.

<sup>892</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, EC Bulletin, 26 February 1984.

<sup>893</sup> Ibid.

<sup>894</sup> G. Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty*, (London: Macmillan, 1995), p.402.

began to become more supportive of British interests. In the run up to the Fontainebleau Council meeting a series of discussions between British and French officials occurred. The importance of this is discussed by William Nicoll who argues that from this meeting a loose arrangement in principle had been reached.<sup>895</sup> Eventually, it was agreed that Britain would receive 66 per cent of its annual contribution. With the matter settled, Leo Tindemans, chairman of the EPP, was quick to express relief.<sup>896</sup> It can be seen from this chapter that the rebate was only possible with the support of the European Parliament which demonstrates its influence in this period of 1979 to 1984. The chapter shows that the European Parliament prior to any treaty reform still had significant influence over Community finances which is not described in other accounts such as those of Desmond Dinan or Helen Wallace who both argue that the European Parliament's powers increased after Treaty reform (the SEA 1986 and Maastricht 1992).<sup>897</sup>

There is much literature on the rebate. Patrick Cosgrave praised Thatcher's patriotism in securing it.<sup>898</sup> Shirley Letwin considers Fontainebleau an 'impressive victory'.<sup>899</sup> Stephen George sees it as significant that Thatcher also secured limits on the CAP budget.<sup>900</sup> Yet others have highlighted the failures of the rebate, economist Ali El-Agraa pointing to its small sum.<sup>901</sup> David Reynolds states that Thatcher's 'insistence on national sovereignty was unreal'.<sup>902</sup> However, Hugo Young raises the most important point as he argues Thatcher had missed the chance to put her own initiatives forward for the Community by allowing the

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<sup>895</sup> W. Nicoll and T. Salmon, *Understanding the European Communities*, (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p.45.

<sup>896</sup> TNA, PREM 19/747, Fontainebleau European Council, 26 June 1984.

<sup>897</sup> D. Dinan, *Origins and Evaluation of the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.305-327, and H. Wallace and W. Wallace, *Policy-Making in the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.52-71.

<sup>898</sup> P. Cosgrave, *Thatcher: the First Term*, (London: Vintage Publishing 1985), pp.27-60.

<sup>899</sup> S. Letwin, p.154.

<sup>900</sup> S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain and the Community*, p.150.

<sup>901</sup> A. M. El-Agraa, 'Mrs Thatcher's EC Policy', in D. S. Bell, ed., *The Conservative Government, 1979-84* (London: Croom, 1985), pp.174-82.

<sup>902</sup> D. Reynolds, p.268.

budget to dominate affairs.<sup>903</sup> Yet these accounts do not examine the European Parliament. The above chapter contributes to these debates as it demonstrates the influence the European Parliament had in the rebate as it was able to stall repayments, a matter not discussed in the historiography. It also shows that the Conservative MEPs (particularly Scott-Hopkins and Christopher Jackson) had worked with the Conservative government on the rebate demonstrating the important diplomatic and political levers MEPs represented. Lastly, the most significant contribution made by the EDG was ensuring their colleagues in the European Parliament voted in favour of the supplementary budget in March 1983 as had this not passed, the rebate would have been further stalled which could have caused more delays as the Community would have to pay a backlog of rebates, meaning a core aspect of the Conservative government's European policy would have been postponed beyond 1983.

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<sup>903</sup> H. Young, *This Blessed plot from Churchill to Blair*, pp.90-100.

## **Chapter Eight: The relationship between the Conservative MEPs and MPs'**

The following chapter will explore the relationship between MEPs and MPs. It will cover the general election in 1983 and the European election of 1984. It will also demonstrate how matters regarding the cost of the MEPs continued to be a concern, as was the growing influence of the European Parliament. It again shows that MEPs that worked on committees covering aspects important to the Conservative Party built stronger relations with Westminster. This will be demonstrated through the work of Diana Elles on the Political Affairs Committee on matters regarding Northern Ireland and the Falklands.

Due to anti-marketers from both the Conservatives and Labour being hostile towards the Community, the European Parliament came under more scrutiny. Once again, this scrutiny concerned the cost associated with MEPs: the salaries and allowances they received for attending the European Parliament in Brussels, Luxembourg, and Strasbourg. MEPs' allowances were inevitably higher than those of MPs at Westminster which created tension. When an increase for MEPs' wages was debated in the House of Commons, Thomas Torney (Labour MP for Bradford South) stated that 'any salary increase for MEPs should be blocked'.<sup>904</sup> Many felt that large amounts of resources were going to the MEPs who were achieving little in the Community. Moreover, Kenneth Morgan has shown that the Labour party under Michael Foot had moved towards a more Eurosceptic view.<sup>905</sup> MPs had a distinct feeling that MEPs undermined them, and relations between the two Parliaments collectively were strained. As seen in this thesis, the function of the European Parliament and its significant cost was regularly debated in the House of Commons.<sup>906</sup> Yet some MEPs felt that

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<sup>904</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 8 c200W09, 15 July 1981.

<sup>905</sup> K. Morgan, *Michael Foot: A Life*, (London: Harper Perennial, 2008), pp.332-382.

<sup>906</sup> See, *Hansard*, HC Deb, Vol 13 cc501-2w, 27 November 1981.

the salary and expenses of an MEP was a particularly sensitive matter to MPs.<sup>907</sup> But in 1981 MEPs felt that they were underpaid due to working in three locations across Europe as well as in their constituency. The attitude of MPs such as Thomas Torney contributed to the MEPs becoming disillusioned with Westminster.

MEPs' pay was eventually discussed in a Cabinet meeting in 1981. William Whitelaw, the Secretary of State for Home Affairs, stated that the European Assembly Pay and Pensions Act in 1979 had initially defined the salary of an MEP as equivalent to that of a MP.<sup>908</sup> An MEP's pay could only increase through a resolution in the House of Commons bearing the Queen's recommendation.<sup>909</sup> The debate on pay had intensified in 1981 due to the pay increase for MPs that came into effect from June 1980 which saw their salaries rise from £10,725 to £11,750. Even civil servants had seen a slight salary increase, hence MEPs thought they would receive one too.<sup>910</sup> The Cabinet understood the potential division salaries would cause and opted to increase the MEPs' pay. Yet to increase their pay the Controller and Auditor General required instructions from the government, as there was no legal authority without a resolution.<sup>911</sup> The government acted swiftly to ensure parity between MEPs and MPs. It did, however, mean that Labour could attack the government on Community matters. But the Conservatives remained committed to the equality of pay between MEPs and MPs due to potential divisions and the subsequent damage these could cause in the party. The matter of pay shows that the Conservative government valued the MEPs and were trying to maintain a strong relationship with the delegation. Yet the cost of the Parliament had significantly increased from £66 million in 1978-79, to £112 million in

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<sup>907</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>908</sup> TNA, CAB 128/70, Minutes of Full Cabinet, 26 March 1981.

<sup>909</sup> Ibid. MEPs pay, EC Affairs, civil servant pay dispute, 26 March 1981.

<sup>910</sup> Ibid.

<sup>911</sup> Ibid.

1979-1980, and £150 million in 1980-81.<sup>912</sup> Thus the European Parliament and MEPs would face more hostility in forthcoming years. MEPs' salaries were a very sensitive topic but in 1981 the pay increase for MEPs clearly shows that Thatcher supported their work as she had done in the past.

In 1982 the Falkland Islands was invaded by Argentina despite the islands being considered a British territory.<sup>913</sup> Upon invasion of the Falklands Britain moved to secure a UN resolution that demanded Argentinian withdrawal from the Falklands and by 3 April 1982 the United Nations Security Council Resolution 502 passed. The resolution demanded Britain immediately cease hostilities and called for a truce between Argentina and Britain.<sup>914</sup> The United States at the time was also concerned that a protracted war could cause the Soviet Union to potentially support Argentina and wanted a diplomatic solution to be reached. The US Secretary of State Alexander Haig had met with both British and Argentinian officials to find a diplomatic solution.<sup>915</sup> However, the Junta regime rejected the UN diplomatic solution and it was becoming difficult to foresee a peaceful solution. Thatcher wanted to press for military intervention and most significantly, had support from the general public from the outset, an IPSOS-MORI poll conducted at the time showed that 84% of respondents were in favour of using British military force and that 71% supported severing diplomatic ties with Argentina.<sup>916</sup> Despite this, the United States worked with Peru who had been an ally of Argentina in the past to reach a peaceful solution, the President of Peru Fernando Belaúnde, worked with Haig and eventually created a peace plan although by 2 May 1982 the Argentine cruiser ARA General Belgrano was torpedoed and sunk by a British submarine marking a significant moment in the conflict. Despite this the Peruvian plan had some support from

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<sup>912</sup> CCA, THCR 2.11.12.1, Gow letter to Jim Spicer MEP (dual-mandate MPs-MEPs), 14 April 1981.

<sup>913</sup> See L. Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign*, (London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>914</sup> Ibid, p.21.

<sup>915</sup> Ibid.

<sup>916</sup> IPSOS-MORI Archive, The Falklands War Panel-Survey, 20 June 1982.



members of the Conservative government, moreover Jim Prior, Patrick Jenkin and Peter Walker favoured a return to diplomatic methods to conclude the matter and Dominica Bruni states this led to Thatcher ‘face rising pressure for a drastic change in strategy’.<sup>917</sup> The EDG also opposed military intervention, believing that a diplomatic agreement should be reached.<sup>918</sup> It also feared that actions of the Conservative government would damage its relationships with other groupings.<sup>919</sup> The European Parliament moved to make a resolution report to outline its views on the Falklands. The matter was very sensitive, the MEPs Diane Elles (who was on the Political Affairs Committee) and Henry Plumb, (who had just become the grouping’s leader) worked closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Number Ten regarding the report.<sup>920</sup> Diane Elles and Henry Plumb clearly communicated that the European Parliament report resolution would oppose British military intervention and that the Falklands as a whole had begun to divide the European Parliament.<sup>921</sup> In a meeting at Number Ten they had also explained that the EDG did not support the naval action that Britain had taken.<sup>922</sup> By May 1982 the report had been completed and Dankert became very vocal suggesting member states should agree to adopt the report, including Britain. The resolution stated that the Community was shocked by the actions of Argentina and feared the effects it could have on other South American nations.<sup>923</sup> The Council of Ministers had already taken steps that reflected the Community’s position by imposing an embargo on Argentinean imports and banning member states from exporting arms to Argentina.<sup>924</sup> Lastly, the report recognised that if Argentina were to comply with the UN’s resolution on the Falklands this would stop Britain’s naval operation in the region.<sup>925</sup> As a result the EDG

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<sup>917</sup> D.M. Bruni, *The British Political Parties and the Falklands War*, (London: Palgrave, 2018), p.58

<sup>918</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July. 2016.

<sup>919</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>920</sup> Ibid.

<sup>921</sup> TNA, PREM, 19/624, President of the European Parliament to Thatcher, 3 May 1982.

<sup>922</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>923</sup> TNA, PREM, 19/624, EDG report to Number Ten, 3 May 1982.

<sup>924</sup> Ibid.

<sup>925</sup> Ibid.

supported the resolution as did the Conservative government. The issue demonstrated that MEPs such as Diana Elles and Henry Plumb could clearly communicate with government departments and certain Conservative MPs. The fact that both MEPs were able to speak to Ministers at Number Ten also shows that the Conservative government valued MEPs who worked on certain European Parliament committees.

However, the Falklands had caused tensions to rise across the Community and was a major concern from the outset for the Conservative government. Upon Argentinian invasion of the Falklands Lord Carrington had resigned on 5 April 1982 as Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs as he believed the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had failed to monitor and anticipate Argentina's intentions effectively before they invaded, Humphrey Atkins who was Lord Privy Seal at the time followed Carrington and also resigned.<sup>926</sup> Some member states opposed Britain's actions which had included a naval response. The matter intensified in the Community and internationally as Britain rejected the UN's request for a ceasefire.<sup>927</sup> In contrast to Denmark and Ireland, France and West Germany supported Britain and suspended military contracts they had with Argentina.<sup>928</sup> Regardless, Britain's navy did not cease operations until Argentina surrendered on 14 June 1982. Lawrence Freedman has argued that throughout the campaign Britain had limited support internationally,<sup>929</sup> while Daniel Gibrán has suggested that the Falklands offered Britain the chance of having a strategic position in South America.<sup>930</sup> The Falklands, together with the Community, were matters that deeply divided the Conservative Party. Robert Blake suggests that the Cabinet had little confidence in Thatcher's support for military intervention, which many in the party

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<sup>926</sup> For more information regarding Lord Carrington and Atkins resignations, see K. Theakston (Ed.), *British Foreign Secretaries since 1974*, (London: Routledge, 2004), p.134.

<sup>927</sup> See L. Martin, 'Institutions and Cooperation: Sanctions during the Falkland Islands Conflict', *International Security*, 16.4 (1982), 143-78.

<sup>928</sup> PREM 19/467, Nott letter to French Defence Minister Herny, 13 May 1982.

<sup>929</sup> L. Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign*, (London: Routledge, 2005), pp.76-87.

<sup>930</sup> D. K. Gibrán, *The Falklands War: Britain versus the Past in the South Atlantic*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1997), p.136.

also opposed.<sup>931</sup> Junior Ministers such as Ken Clarke and Chris Patten opposed intervention, and even senior figures such as David Wolfson and Alan Walters opposed her actions, both of whom felt a diplomatic deal should be reached with Argentina.<sup>932</sup> The opposition of the EDG adds to Blake's work as it shows another group who opposed the government's actions in the Falklands that was within the Conservative Party. Yet Thatcher pressed for military intervention as she had the support of the British public from the outset of the war.<sup>933</sup> In his diary, Alan Walters remarked on the negativity within the Conservative Party as everyone 'was very upset' over these resignations.<sup>934</sup> The division over the Falklands was a very significant moment for the Conservatives as it allowed for divisions on other matters to come to the forefront, including the Community. Yet the report again showed that some MEPs were able to clearly communicate their views with the Conservative government, as seen at the meeting at Number Ten. The Falklands is an example where certain Ministers and MEPs opposed Thatcher's decision.

In 1983 there was also a British general election and Eric Evans suggests that high unemployment and a decrease in overall productivity since 1979 led the campaign debates.<sup>935</sup> However, due to the SDP–Labour split, the Community would also be a topic that would be debated in this general election. Labour was openly hostile towards the Community, and many of its MEPs criticised the Community during European Parliament debates.<sup>936</sup> Barbara Castle, on reflection, emphasised the importance of 'safeguard[ing] British interests from a federalist institution'.<sup>937</sup> The Labour Party at Westminster also attacked the Community more widely in parliamentary debate. Peter Shore (Labour MP for Stepney and Poplar) stated that he 'deplores the continuing failure of Her Majesty's Government to end the scandal of

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<sup>931</sup> R. Blake, *From Peel to Thatcher*, (London: Fourth Estate, 1998), pp.317-319.

<sup>932</sup> Ibid.

<sup>933</sup> Ibid.

<sup>934</sup> CCA, Walters MSS WTRS.3.1.2 Alan Walters diary entry, 5 April 1982.

<sup>935</sup> E. Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism*, (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.74-79.

<sup>936</sup> B. Castle, *Fighting All the Way*, (London: House of Stratus, 2002), p.25.

<sup>937</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Parliamentary debate, 5 May 1982.

Britain's inequitable contributions to the EEC'.<sup>938</sup> Because of these views the Conservatives believed that Labour would campaign on an anti-European platform. Scott-Hopkins and Peter Walker (Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) recommended that the Conservatives run on a pro-European platform and highlight the benefits of the Community. Both suggested that employers who traded with other member states explain to their employees the dangers of an exit, namely the effect it could have on jobs and wages.<sup>939</sup> The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) was particularly keen on promoting the benefits of the EEC and had been a traditional proponent for the Community since the 1960s.<sup>940</sup> Moreover, many Conservative MEPs supported the European Parliament, hence were willing to run on a pro-European platform. As in 1979, MEPs believed that the European Parliament was the future as a large Heathite presence still dominated the Conservative delegation. Though MEPs were part of the British Conservative Party many still saw themselves as a body independent of the party at Westminster as they also worked in the EDG which was a multi-national grouping of the European Parliament and not Westminster.<sup>941</sup>

Scott-Hopkins believed that in the election campaign, Labour would attack the cost of the EEC through budget contributions and the inefficiency of its work along with matters such as sovereignty.<sup>942</sup> All three of these core matters could be linked to the European Parliament. Because of this the Utley Group (chaired by Peter Utley) worked on a mock manifesto defining the Conservatives' attitudes towards the Community.<sup>943</sup> It highlighted the financial benefits of the EEC, the jobs it brought to the UK, and how membership attracted overseas investors. The group also argued for the importance of membership regarding Britain's wider defence policy. If a member state withdrew from the Community the Soviet Union would see

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<sup>938</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 37 cc665-750, 21 February 1983.

<sup>939</sup> CCA, THCR, 1.15.16, Walker minute to MT, 4 November 1982.

<sup>940</sup> See N. Rollings, *British Business in the Formative Years of European Integration 1945–1973*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>941</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>942</sup> *Ibid*, Scott-Hopkins correspondence to Walker, 5 October 1982.

<sup>943</sup> CCA, THCR, 2.7.3.7, General election: CRD minute to MT: Findings of the Utley Group, 17 October 1983.

this as a sign of Western disunity, damaging Britain's position in the world. The report concluded that the party should take 'a middle of the road' view on Europe and reject Labour's stance of a complete withdrawal.<sup>944</sup> The European Parliament was not mentioned in the review reflecting the ambivalent views the Conservative Party. Yet the problem for the Conservatives was that the European Parliament was an elected chamber whose powers were steadily increasing. Traditionally, Conservatives had wanted to retain the majority of these powers within the Council of Ministers. One Conservative MEP felt that the Conservative MPs as a whole 'collectively despised the MEPs [thinking] that Europe was undermining them, not individually but as a group and that was very damaging'.<sup>945</sup> Other member states shared a similar view, believing that the European Parliament undermined national parliaments. However, the Conservatives still had to manage their MEPs and thus opted to avoid discussing the matter in great detail in their manifesto. The decision to avoid the European Parliament damaged the Conservatives' relationship with MEPs as it contributed to some MEPs feeling undervalued and acted more autonomously from the party.

The general election was held on 9 June 1983, after the Conservative government had achieved an agreement with the Community to give Britain a rebate in that year. Brendan Evans suggests that this put the Conservatives in a strong position heading into the election.<sup>946</sup> John Young argues that the Falklands had boosted Thatcher's popularity.<sup>947</sup> Labour had campaigned on an anti-European platform. Its manifesto stated that it wanted a complete British withdrawal from the EEC. Labour had also warned previously that any of its MEPs who disagreed with the party line on Europe would be removed from their posts.<sup>948</sup> A

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<sup>944</sup> Ibid.

<sup>945</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>946</sup> B. Evans, *Thatcherism and British Politics, 1975-1999*, (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), pp.74-79.

<sup>947</sup> J.W. Young, p.143.

<sup>948</sup> Labour Party Archive, *The Labour Party manifesto: The New Hope for Britain*, 9 June 1983

poll suggested that out of the seventeen Labour MEPs only six would remain.<sup>949</sup> Labour had been weakened by defections to the SDP following the split in 1981. The Conservatives attempted to portray themselves as the European party for the country. In their manifesto they even pointed out the importance of their MEPs in ensuring the reform of the Community. They wanted to use MEPs to divert funds away from agriculture and towards industry.<sup>950</sup> These ideas also set the foundations for the Conservative 1984 European elections campaign. It provided clarity between MEPs and the party, in stark contrast to Labour, whose manifesto suggested complete withdrawal from the Community in order to push through the party's own economic policies.

The Conservatives suggested that they rejected both extremes regarding the Community and had the nation's best interest at heart. Furthermore, the manifesto highlighted the potential shortcomings of Britain leaving the EEC. It suggested that economically it would be catastrophic as the EEC was one of the world's largest trading blocs, and that it would lessen Britain's chances of overseas investment while losing an estimated two million jobs.<sup>951</sup> It also highlighted the effects leaving would have on an international stage. In a Cold War world, the Soviet Union would rejoice in seeing Britain becoming isolated. Moreover, British withdrawal could potentially undermine the European project as a whole.<sup>952</sup> The Conservatives eventually won the election with 397 seats against Labour's 261, increasing their overall majority by 38 seats since the 1979 election; Labour lost 52 seats, due to the SDP and Liberal alliance splitting the vote between the left and centre-left parties.<sup>953</sup> Richard Hill describes the disastrous impact of Labour's poor performance and suggests that 'the

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<sup>949</sup> J. Wyles, 'Labour MEPs face test of loyalty', *Financial Times*, 28 January 1983.

<sup>950</sup> CCA, THCR, 2.7.3.7, *Conservative Party General Election manifesto*, 9 June 1983.

<sup>951</sup> Ibid.

<sup>952</sup> Ibid.

<sup>953</sup> R. Hill, *The Labour Party's Economic Strategy 1979-1997: The Long Road Back*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001), p.27.

campaign itself was a political and organisational shambles'.<sup>954</sup> With a larger overall majority than 1979, the Conservatives had the ability to be more assertive on matters such as Britain's future relationship with the Community. The election also demonstrated that in 1983 the Conservatives were more pro-European than they would be in the near future under Thatcher. Yet the fact that the SDP, Liberals and Labour had all mentioned their MEPs in their manifestos and the Conservatives did not explicitly, and MEPs felt disappointed and that an opportunity had been missed feeling that Conservative MEPs had achieved more in the EP than their Liberal and Labour counterparts.<sup>955</sup>

After the election Margaret Thatcher moved to assist the Conservative MEPs. She understood the powers of the European Parliament, as demonstrated by Britain obtaining the budget rebate. She also understood how frustrating the European Parliament could be as seen with the Northern Ireland report and the stalling of rebate payments. Moreover, with the EDG being a small non-diverse grouping, Thatcher understood its limited effectiveness. However, Richard Corbett has shown that, increasingly, the majority of European Parliament work (in the 1980s) was being carried out in committees and not in the hemicycle.<sup>956</sup> But even in committees grouping size and relations with other MEPs were important. Due to this, Thatcher discussed with Kohl at an Anglo-German summit the importance of like-minded groupings working together.<sup>957</sup> She even stated that Conservatism did not serve the sole purpose to preserve past practices but also to adapt them to the needs of the future.<sup>958</sup> She emphasised the need for the Conservatives to put forward a credible candidate for the presidency of the European Parliament. Kohl agreed, but also highlighted the need to avoid a

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<sup>954</sup> Ibid.

<sup>955</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/2/4, EDG Grouping Meeting, 11 June 1983.

<sup>956</sup> See R. Corbett, *The European Parliament's Role in Closer EU Integration*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp 230-255.

<sup>957</sup> CCA, THCR, 2.6.3.82, Cole minute to Gummer: Anglo-German summit, 2 May 1984.

<sup>958</sup> Ibid.

repetition of the last presidency election which Dankert had won.<sup>959</sup> Kohl also believed that both the EPP and EDG could not achieve anything significant in the European Parliament unless they established a unified grouping. The Conservative Party was supportive of a merger as long as appropriate steps were taken to safeguard EDG members.<sup>960</sup> Thatcher had suggested that representatives of the German Conservative MEPs (many of whom were members of the EPP) meet with British Conservative MEPs directly after the European elections due to occur in June 1984.<sup>961</sup> The fact that Thatcher was advised to attend by officials suggests that the Conservative government understood the value of MEPs.<sup>962</sup> Moreover, the Conservatives understood that the European Parliament dealt with matters central to the government, particularly regarding the CAP and Britain's budget contribution. Since its powers over the budget had increased in 1975, the European Parliament had been more effective, as demonstrated by the role it played in winning a budget rebate and delaying the process of rebate payments. Hence the European Parliament was a developing institution and one where the Conservative government sought further influence. Thatcher's meeting with Kohl shows again that she had to think strategically about the Conservative MEPs and shows her willingness to work with Continental Conservatives.

As seen previously, Thatcher wanted closer relations with other European Conservatives, even entertaining the idea of a merger between the EDG and EPP.<sup>963</sup> Many Conservative MEPs did not wish to discuss the future of the EDG during a European election campaign. They believed that 'attempting to campaign while suggesting Conservative MEPs were planning to join another European grouping would be political suicide', although privately

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<sup>959</sup> Ibid.

<sup>960</sup> Ibid.

<sup>961</sup> Ibid.

<sup>962</sup> CCA, THCR, 2.6.3.82, Briefing note, 25 April 1984.

<sup>963</sup> CCA, THCR 2/10/6, European Democrat Union Conference Resolutions, 20 July 1979.



EDG members had thought about the future of the grouping.<sup>964</sup> There were three different approaches being considered within the EDG about its future. Some MEPs were in favour of joining the EPP, as they could better influence the European Parliament being in a larger grouping.<sup>965</sup> They believed it would facilitate gaining support from fellow MEPs, a major obstacle since 1973. Moreover, being in a multinational grouping such as the EPP could ease tensions and reduce the animosity the EDG faced. Other members of the EDG supported the idea of joining the Liberal grouping, on the basis that its views were similar to British Conservatives.<sup>966</sup> The Liberals had sat to the right of the EDG in the European Parliament. In 1984 there were also rumours that the grouping would be led by the former European Parliament president Simone Veil who had been an ally of the EDG.<sup>967</sup> The Liberal grouping at the time was also willing to change its name to make it more appealing to other MEPs. Lastly, a third group within the EDG thought it should remain as an independent entity and used as a platform to further British interests.<sup>968</sup> These MEPs believed that the role of the EDG would be limited if it were to join a large grouping like the EPP. They also believed that the EDG could attract MEPs from Spain and Portugal when they joined the Community.<sup>969</sup> The grouping was evenly split between the three options.<sup>970</sup> Conservative MPs, however, felt that the EDG should merge with the EPP and since direct elections in 1979 the Conservative delegation was ‘an embarrassing and unwieldy power base’.<sup>971</sup> Yet as seen with the rebate, Conservative MEPs had been effective, and some of them built strong relationships at Westminster.<sup>972</sup> Thatcher supporting a merger showed her interest in the MEPs; however, it was a view that was not shared by two-thirds of the delegation. As a result, her view to

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<sup>964</sup> Author interview with Michael Welsh, 11 November 2016.

<sup>965</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>966</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner QC, 18 October 2016.

<sup>967</sup> Bodleian Library, CRD 4/22/41, EDG Grouping relationships, 6 March 1984.

<sup>968</sup> Ibid.

<sup>969</sup> Ibid.

<sup>970</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner QC, 18 October 2016.

<sup>971</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive I. Murray, *The Times*, ‘Tory Euro-MPs divided over plan to merge with right wing’, 20 February 1984.

<sup>972</sup> These MEPs included Christopher Prout, Christopher Jackson, Diane Elles, Scott-Hopkins and Henry Plumb.

potentially merge with the EPP showed a difference between MEPs Thatcher. The differing opinions on the future of the EDG had created internal divisions within the grouping. These divisions had developed because direct elections had increased the number of MEPs in the EDG, but also because of the circumstances in which Scott-Hopkins had departed as leader.

In 1984 the second European elections would be held. Conservative MEPs were aware of the low turnout in 1979 and did not want a repeat.<sup>973</sup> Dankert even emphasised the importance of the European Parliament and the work of its MEPs, stressing that European elections should not be seen through a domestic lens but rather from a Community perspective.<sup>974</sup> The UK agreed to make a documentary entitled 'Decision Makers' to generate more interest in the European Parliament. Conservative MEP Richard Cottrell was interviewed for this and he argued that the European Parliament was an integral part of the Community and had been for the past 25 years. However, given that the media took more interest in Westminster politics than in the European Parliament, the British public were left uninformed about developments in the European Parliament and the wider Community. Cottrell concluded by stating that there was no way of educating half a million people on the complexities of the European Parliament without the support of the media.<sup>975</sup> Other MEPs also spoke on the documentary including Barbara Castle, John Hume, and Pieter Dankert and was aired on 3 June 1984, two weeks prior to the election date. The documentary was an attempt made by the European Parliament to increase awareness of the European Parliament in Britain. The MEPs wanted a higher turnout for the 1984 election because if turnout remained low, the credibility of the European Parliament would be further damaged.

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<sup>973</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/9/23, The European Parliament: Problems, Powers, Opportunities: A Conservative view, 19 January 1984.

<sup>974</sup> British Universities Film and Video Archive (BUFVA), Pieter Dankert on European Elections, 18 June 1984.

<sup>975</sup> BUFVA, Decision makers, 3 June 1984.

During this period, Neil Kinnock, the leader of the Labour Party, had undertaken the task of reforming the party through his policy review. Richard Hill suggests this was an attempt made to disassociate it from the Eurosceptic, 'loony left' image.<sup>976</sup> Kinnock also spoke on the upcoming elections. He stated that the elections were of great importance as they provided the public with the opportunity to exercise their democratic right.<sup>977</sup> He also stated the importance of the Greater London Council (GLC) and how the European Parliament elections could be used to support this.<sup>978</sup> However, this again portrayed European elections from a purely domestic standpoint rather than from the European perspective Dankert had urged. Furthermore, despite Conservative Party efforts, not all senior figures were concerned with the European elections or the European Parliament, being more focused on larger issues regarding the Community. They felt that other fora such as the Council of Ministers were more effective in addressing Community matters. The issue regarding direct elections and the manner in which they were viewed (through a domestic lens) shows that the European Parliament as an institution would struggle to find a role in UK politics, and this is proven through consistent low turnout in European elections.

Both parties published their manifestos on 22 May 1984. Labour highlighted the failures of the Conservative government to gain reforms in the Community in vital areas, including the CAP and Britain's budget contribution. Labour's manifesto stated that it was the only party that had the 'determination to fight for reform'.<sup>979</sup> However, it also suggested that Britain should remain in the EEC until 1989 but should retain the right to withdraw after this date. Some Labour members such as Eric Heffer (MP for Liverpool Walton) believed that a strong

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<sup>976</sup> R. Hill, p.55-65.

<sup>977</sup> Ibid.

<sup>978</sup> Labour had a majority of six in the GLC which was led by Ken Livingstone. He had used this position to openly oppose and antagonise the Conservative government in a number of ways, including the use of billboards highlighting London's rising unemployment figures. See S. Buckle, *The Way Out: A History of Homosexuality in Modern Britain*, (London: Tauris, 2015), p.101.

<sup>979</sup> Labour Party Archive, Labour European Election manifesto, 21 May 1984.

European Parliament 'would take us a giant step along the road to a federal Europe'.<sup>980</sup> The Conservative manifesto was similar to the general election manifesto of the previous year. It suggested that Labour was Europhobic, while the SDP was perceived as Eurofanatic and wanted Britain to be engulfed by the Community.<sup>981</sup> It also reiterated the Conservatives' successes in securing rebates for Britain. Furthermore, Anthony Forster has stated that the manifesto attempted to link Community membership to mutual European defence.<sup>982</sup> Through the manifesto it can be seen, however, that the Conservatives viewed the Community's fundamental function as a common market in goods and services. They believed this would make member states competitive and provide budgetary discipline. Thatcher, however, suggested that she wished the matter of Britain's budget contribution had been concluded before polling day, stating that she could not wait to 'put the haggling behind her'.<sup>983</sup> The Conservatives were confident going into the election and foresaw a result similar to the general election, meaning that they would win 58 seats out of a possible 78.

The results, however, were different to those predicted. The Conservatives won 45 seats, Labour 32, and the SDP one. Compared with the 1979 European elections, the Conservative Party had lost fifteen seats while Labour had gained fifteen.<sup>984</sup> John Gummer, the Conservative Party chairman, suggested that the Conservatives should be satisfied at the outcome, and that it was the 'best result for any comparable sitting government' in the EEC.<sup>985</sup> He went on to state that it would be unrealistic for a government one year into a new parliament not to lose any seats. However, the turnout in Britain was again low at 33 per cent compared with an average of 60 per cent for other member states. The turnout showed a gap

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<sup>980</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb, vol 25 cc1101-42, 17 June 1982.

<sup>981</sup> Bodleian Library, PUB 235/1, Conservative Party European Election Manifesto, 21 May 1984.

<sup>982</sup> A. Forster, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics*, (London: Routledge, 2002), pp.66-67. Also see Bodleian Library, Conservative European Election manifesto, 21 May 1984.

<sup>983</sup> J. Haviland *The Times*, 'Tory and Labour Clash over new vision for Europe', 22 May 1984.

<sup>984</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, 1984 election results. European Community News No. 26/1984, 10 July 1984.

<sup>985</sup> CCA, THCR, 2.6.3107, John Gummer statement, 18 June 1984.

between the British public and the European Parliament,<sup>986</sup> and demonstrated that the European Parliament would not effectively fit into British politics. The low turnout also damaged MEPs' morale.

From the 1980s the influence of the European Parliament was seen through the British rebate which hardened the views of MPs on the European Parliament. The situation was exacerbated in 1985 as the European Parliament wanted to reform the Treaty of Rome in order to gain further powers for itself, allowing it to play a larger role in the decision-making process. Helen Wallace argues that many MEPs attempted to address the imbalance between the Council of Ministers and European Parliament.<sup>987</sup> MEPs also felt that due to poor communication between the Council of Ministers and MEPs, as it stood in 1985 the European Parliament could not play a part in decision-making.<sup>988</sup> The President of the European Parliament Pierre Pflimlin, (French EPP member) argued that the Community was becoming too short sighted. He felt that the focal point of the Community should be the re-launch of Europe and that a more prominent role for the European Parliament would facilitate the re-launch.<sup>989</sup> The President of the Council Jacques Poos, (Luxembourg's Foreign Minister) said that the Council would have to proceed with some caution if the Treaty of Rome were going to be reformed. Poos also highlighted that there needed to be better cooperation between MEPs and Ministers. But, more importantly, a balance of power between the two institutions had to remain.<sup>990</sup> Britain and Denmark were both hesitant about an increase in the European Parliament's role. Georges Foulkes (Labour's shadow spokesman on foreign affairs) launched a scathing attack on MEPs stating that 'Many Euro-MPs seem to have too much time on their

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<sup>986</sup> Ibid.

<sup>987</sup> H. Wallace and W. Wallace, *Policy-Making in the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.52-71.

<sup>988</sup> These powers would be later granted to the European Parliament under the Single European Act (SEA) which came into effect in 1987 see H. Wallace and W. Wallace, *Policy-Making in the European Union*.

<sup>989</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, Q. Peel, *The Times*, 'EEC Council Clashes with MEPs over Treaty reform plan', 23 October 1985.

<sup>990</sup> Ibid.

hands and little function to perform’.<sup>991</sup> Conservative Party members also spoke out against the European Parliament as they saw it as a supranational organisation that would undermine Westminster. William Whitelaw, the Deputy Prime Minister, had even likened the nomination of a MEP to that of a Lord, and suggested they had a minimal role to play.<sup>992</sup> Generally, therefore, there was hostility in Britain towards the European Parliament. The views in Westminster had a direct impact on Conservative MEPs’ morale, as they had worked on important issues for the Conservative government such as Britain’s rebate. Regarding the European Parliament demanding more powers in the decision-making process, it can be seen that MEPs viewed this as a natural progression. The fact that the EP had control over the budget and had been using its powers in relation to Community finance more readily led to MEPs feeling that the European Parliament should play a role beyond consultation.

Following the replacement of Scott-Hopkins by Henry Plumb, Conservative MEPs began to act more independently. Plumb, as seen previously, was vocal on matters such as farm prices and the EMS. Additionally, MEPs did not have access to the House of Commons which made it difficult to manage relations with fellow Conservative MPs. EDG members had monthly visits to the European Parliament’s London Office. This was close to the House of Commons allowing MPs to attend also, as well as members of the CBI and NFU.<sup>993</sup> Despite this, very few MPs took advantage of the chance to meet MEPs. Andrew Pearce (MEP for Merseyside and Cheshire) stated that ‘if the relationship between MEPs and MPs had been better [...] the Conservative Party could have had a better overall policy towards the EU’.<sup>994</sup> By 1985 MEPs struggled to keep in contact with MPs due to the lack of opportunities for the two to meet, which damaged the relationship between the two. Due to this some MEPs eventually gave up

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<sup>991</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, Q. Peel, *The Times*, ‘Euro Poll doubts by Labour’, 27 December 1985.

<sup>992</sup> CCA, THCR 2.6.3107, Whitelaw letter to MT, 24 June 1984.

<sup>993</sup> A. Pearce, *My Personal Story: In and Out of Europe*, (Kibworth Beauchamp: Matador, 2003), p.113.

<sup>994</sup> Ibid.

trying to maintain relations with MPs. In contrast, many members of the House of Lords had consultations with MEPs regarding Community matters, and MEPs found it easier to work with the Lords.<sup>995</sup> MEPs felt that MPs were sometimes dismissive towards them, believing them to be members of a separate supranational institution which widened the gap between MEPs and MPs.

Geoffrey Howe, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, wanted to change the relationship between Westminster Conservatives and those in Strasbourg. He maintained regular contact with MEPs and eventually made Malcolm Rifkind head of relations between MEPs and MPs.<sup>996</sup> In addition, Howe made a list of senior Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials to contact if a specific Minister could not be reached.<sup>997</sup> Howe hoped these measures would improve relations between the Conservatives in Strasbourg and Westminster. In 1985, however, Howe addressed the European Parliament, setting out Britain's position on the future of the European Parliament. He stated that the European Parliament was integral to the Community, being its only democratically elected body. Despite this, he suggested that parity between Community institutions was essential, and that the European Parliament should not have an increased role in the Community.<sup>998</sup> Howe, therefore, played an active role regarding the European Parliament and Conservative MEPs. Howe's actions again show that the Conservative government attempted to maintain clear lines of communication with MEPs, particularly as Henry Plumb was a more vocal leader than Scott-Hopkins and was willing to act more assertively. Moreover, by 1985 and unlike the 1970s, there were only two Conservative MEPs who held a dual mandate, Tom Normanton (MEP for Rochdale, MP for Cheadle) and James Spicer (MEP for Sussex, MP for

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<sup>995</sup> Author interview with Michael Welsh, 11 November 2016.

<sup>996</sup> TNA, FCO 30/5451, Contact with MEPs, 1983-85.

<sup>997</sup> Ibid.

<sup>998</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Geoffrey Howe addresses the European Parliament, 14 January 1985.

West Dorset); another reason why the gap between Strasbourg and Westminster began to widen.

The chapter demonstrates that the Conservative MPs had made efforts to ensure relations with MEPs existed. The increase in MEPs' pay shows that the Conservative government valued them. Regarding the Falklands Nicholas Crowson has argued that the Community's support 'mollified some Conservatives'.<sup>999</sup> Others, such as Richard Vinen, have suggested that Thatcher's dominance over the Falklands divided the Conservative Party.<sup>1000</sup> The Falklands report showed that MEPs were able to build relations with Ministers and were also a group within the Conservative Party that opposed Thatcher's actions, adding to debate around the Falklands. Additionally, Howe's efforts to ensure communication with MEPs highlighted that some Ministers understood that MEPs had a role to play. However, MEPs still felt undermined by the various comments made by MPs in debates or statements in newspapers. Furthermore, as the EP was not explicitly mentioned in the Conservative manifesto for the general election in 1983, some MEPs felt alienated. The matter was worsened by Conservative MPs wanting the EDG to merge with the EPP as almost two-thirds of the EDG disagreed with this course of action. Many opposed a merger feeling that since the 1982 European Parliament presidency election they would struggle to work with the EPP. Thus, it can be seen from this chapter that in spite of efforts being made by Westminster, MEPs felt that they were being undermined which greatly damaged the relationship between MPs and MEPs.

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<sup>999</sup> N.J. Crowson, *The Conservative Party and European Integration since 1945: At the Heart of Europe?*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p.131.

<sup>1000</sup> R. Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era*, (London, Pocket Books, 2009), p.36.



## **Section Four: The Conservative Party and Delorism 1986-92**

The following period was the single most turbulent period since British accession to the Community. Delors completed the single market through the Single European Act (SEA) and then the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. With Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) the Community was moving at a much faster pace than ever before. Both the SEA and Maastricht also gave the European Parliament more powers. However, despite developments in the Community, the CAP remained untouched by either treaty reform which frustrated the Conservative Party and Thatcher. QMV was pivotal for the future of Europe, as it gave smaller European nations a platform to influence its development.

Thatcher and the Conservatives began to grow more sceptical regarding European integration in this period, which culminated in Thatcher's Bruges speech in 1988. She would eventually be forced to resign and was replaced by John Major in 1990. Maastricht was an important moment for the Conservative government as Britain was able to gain opt-outs from the negotiations over joining the single currency. Yet two years later the ERM crisis was a historic event and would lead to deeper British Euroscepticism.

Alongside all of these major events there were many developments for Conservative MEPs. Henry Plumb became President of the European Parliament in January 1987, and he also expanded the EDG as Spanish members joined. However, the 1989 European Elections devastated the Conservative MEPs as they lost fifteen seats. This was worsened as Spanish members left the EDG to join the EPP. Under the chairmanship of Christopher Prout, the remaining Conservatives would also join the EPP in 1992 – a historic moment for the MEPs, as by the end of 1992 the EP had more powers than ever before and with the Conservative

MEPs in the second largest grouping some MEPs felt they could have more influence in the European Parliament than they had in the past.

## **Chapter Nine: Completion of the Single Market and the European Parliament**

The following chapter will examine two major treaty reforms which include the Single European Act (1986) and the Maastricht Treaty (1992). It will give a detailed account of how both treaty reforms impacted the European Parliament, the British government's reaction, and the EDG's position during this period. The chapter will show that Diana Elles standing down as an MEP and Henry Plumb having to balance different commitments damaged communication with Number Ten and other Conservative MPs which in turn led to relations between Thatcher and the MEPs worsening, however they both continued to work together as will be seen with the passing of the SEA<sup>1001</sup>

Continuing Delors' plan to develop the economic aspect of the Community by completing the internal market, the SEA was agreed by twelve member states in February 1986. The SEA was one of the most significant (and first) revisions of the Treaty of Rome, and Britain signed with little opposition. Helen Wallace argues that the SEA embedded a wider policy agenda of the Delors' Commission.<sup>1002</sup> Stephen Wall observes that the SEA was agreed by the Prime Minister as it would provide an opportunity for Britain to press its national interests. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office agreed as they felt it could build a strategic relationship between France and Germany.<sup>1003</sup> John Young has argued that the SEA 'codified policies which had been developing since 1957'.<sup>1004</sup> The SEA had two objectives. First, it was to create a single market by 1992, achieved through the removal of several barriers: physical barriers such as the movement of goods and people; technical barriers including transport, technology, capital, and financial services; and fiscal barriers including excise duty and

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<sup>1001</sup> The chapter however, will not examine the change in leadership from Thatcher to John Major as this will be discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>1002</sup> H. Wallace and W. Wallace, *Policy-Making in the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.57.

<sup>1003</sup> S. Wall, *A Stranger in Europe*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.65-66.

<sup>1004</sup> J.W Young, *Britain and European Unity 1945-92*, (New York: Macmillan, 1992), p.152.

VAT.<sup>1005</sup> The aim of the SEA was to finalise a commitment to the completion of a single market by 1992. The second objective of the treaty was to streamline and define the Community's procedures, as well as to deepen integration, made via political provisions. It proposed that member states commit to the future Economic and Monetary Union.<sup>1006</sup> Neil Nugent has argued that some political integration was required for economic integration.<sup>1007</sup> The EDG, like much of the European Parliament, was supportive of the SEA as it could potentially increase the influence of MEPs.<sup>1008</sup>

Another major reform was the introduction of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) for all matters that concerned the single market (barring matters concerning movement of people and taxation). QMV was significant for the Community, and Mark Gilbert has commented that Britain felt it was a 'crucial dilution of sovereignty.'<sup>1009</sup> QMV was important to smaller countries as it gave them a platform to influence European affairs, QMV would go on to change the way the Community operated, as matters that required QMV would need the approval of the EP under the co-decision procedure.<sup>1010</sup> Regardless, it meant that decisions on policy matters could happen quicker. It also gave the European Parliament an increased role in Community affairs.<sup>1011</sup> As seen in the previous sections, since 1973 the European Parliament was lobbying to extend its decision-making powers. Mark Gilbert observes that the signing of the SEA 'was the largest single step towards fuller economic and political integration in Europe since the signature of the EEC treaty in 1957'.<sup>1012</sup> The SEA was

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<sup>1005</sup> European Parliament Archive, The Single European Act, 26 June 1986.

<sup>1006</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1007</sup> N. Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, (London: Palgrave, 2015), pp.51-66.

<sup>1008</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/9/31, Towards the Single Market (pamphlet publication by EDG), 15 January 1987.

<sup>1009</sup> M. Gilbert, *Surpassing Realism: The Politics of European Integration since 1945*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), p.155.

<sup>1010</sup> The majority of Community decisions would require QMV under future treaty ratifications (Amsterdam Treaty 1997 and the Lisbon Treaty 2007) hence the EP under co-decision would be consulted in almost all areas of Community decision-making. See, N. Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*.

<sup>1011</sup> See Introduction.

<sup>1012</sup> M. Gilbert, p.155.

catalysed by high unemployment across Europe which was steadily increasing throughout the 1980s. The SEA however, did provide an opportunity for the European Parliament to expand its influence which was supported by the EDG.

Delors' vision of Europe was also crucial in the development of the SEA, Patrick Crowley stating that 'Delors had a vision for the EU but also had the diplomatic skills' to achieve his goals.<sup>1013</sup> Through QMV, the SEA also limited the degree to which a single member state could influence the Community. Moreover, the cooperation procedure was the first real step in the European Parliament gaining decision-making powers. The significance of the SEA meant that many member states had internal concerns surrounding its implementation and many voiced them, including the British Conservative government. Conservative MEPs saw the SEA as an important step in increasing the influence of the European Parliament, although the final decision remained with the Council of Ministers. The SEA was traditionally supported by MEPs for many years. Amédée Turner, for example, promoted the benefits Suffolk would have through the SEA.<sup>1014</sup> MEPs including Christopher Prout, Christopher Jackson, Henry Plumb, Diane Elles, and Amédée Turner had all worked with government departments to promote the SEA since 1983.<sup>1015</sup> The civil service and the government also saw the benefits of the MEPs promoting the SEA as they generated public support in their individual constituencies.<sup>1016</sup> Hence the SEA is a good example of the influence on Whitehall by MEPs, who were often more advanced in their European policy than the government. But both Conservative MPs and MEPs were left frustrated that the SEA had not addressed the CAP.

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<sup>1013</sup> P. Crowley, ed., *EU Economic Policy at the Dawn of the Century*, (New York: Nova, 2008), p.viii.

<sup>1014</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner QC, 18 October 2016.

<sup>1015</sup> CCA, CATH 243, Promoting the Single Market, 15 February 1985.

<sup>1016</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner, 18 October 2016. Particularly the economic benefits it could have as businesses could trade more easily with member-state countries.

The select committee that examined the SEA concluded that the treaty would weaken the British Parliament, as Ministers would not be able to influence the Community without institutional support, the committee also concluded that the SEA went further than the European Council had suggested in December 1985.<sup>1017</sup> They would also be subjected to closer scrutiny by the European Parliament which was perceived as another obstacle undermining Westminster. The cross-party Commons Affairs Committee also concluded that the SEA went further than what was suggested at the European Council in December 1985.<sup>1018</sup> Conservative MP and former chairman of the 1922 Committee Edward Du Cann stated that the SEA signified a more integrated Community and a lesser role for the UK.<sup>1019</sup> Edward Taylor (Conservative MP for Rochford and Southend East) argued that ‘the number of regulations that the SEA forces upon Britain affected Britain on a number of levels’.<sup>1020</sup> He felt that great changes to the British constitution would come about when the single market was completed in 1992. Taylor also reiterated that Britain should block reforms that were necessary to preserve British sovereignty, which included increasing the European Parliament’s scope.<sup>1021</sup> The EDG supported the Conservative government as it too wanted the SEA to be enforced.<sup>1022</sup> Yet some EDG members took offence at the comments made by Edward Taylor regarding the European Parliament. MEP Ben Patterson stated that Taylor’s comments only showed ‘the gap in perception which has opened up between Britain’s elected representatives in respectively Westminster and Brussels’.<sup>1023</sup> Patterson’s comments also highlighted the growing frustration some MEPs felt towards their Westminster counterparts.

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<sup>1017</sup> TNA, FCO 30/6542, House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs inquiry into the Single European Act, 20 December 1986.

<sup>1018</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1019</sup> *Ibid.*, Du Cann to MT, 26 March 1986.

<sup>1020</sup> *Ibid.*, Report on Single Market, 18 December 1986.

<sup>1021</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1022</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, B, Patterson, *Financial Times*, ‘Single European Act’, 8 July 1986.

<sup>1023</sup> *Ibid.*

As has been shown, MEPs had worked to reform the Community since entering in 1973 and had followed the party line. They had been crucial in attempting to reform both the CAP and Britain's budget contribution. By 1987 there were many who supported the SEA. The CBI, for example, felt that the SEA was vital for British business and the economy.<sup>1024</sup> The Foreign and Commonwealth Office had also been supportive, despite the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Geoffrey Howe arguing that the party was replaying the accession battles of 1972.<sup>1025</sup> Thatcher herself had signed the SEA with little apprehension in spite of her less federal vision of the Community. Stephen Wall has argued that Thatcher saw the benefits of the single market but did not support further integration that was meant to proceed the SEA.<sup>1026</sup> The treaty was signed after Britain's budget contribution was resolved, and during the 'new cold war' era. Due to these reasons, Thatcher wanted to develop a positive image for Britain in the Community and thus the SEA was accepted by the government. Moreover, the SEA was one of Delors' greatest achievements as it introduced QMV which streamlined decision-making in the Community.<sup>1027</sup> He had achieved this through gaining the support of all heads of governments including Thatcher, as Britain had wanted the completion of the Single Market which could only be achieved through the deregulation of various directives. To achieve this, QMV was required; thus 'Delors had created a set of circumstances where QMV seemed to make sense' to all heads of government.<sup>1028</sup> MEPs had supported Thatcher and were keen on the SEA but for different reasons. Many still saw the European Parliament playing a large role in Community affairs in the future, and wanted it to have more powers, which the SEA granted; many MEPs had even

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<sup>1024</sup> House of Lords Archives, Select Committee on the EU, Inquiry into Re-launching the Single Market, 3 January 1986.

<sup>1025</sup> FCO 30/6541, Geoffrey Howe note to MT, 22 May 1986.

<sup>1026</sup> S. Wall, *Stranger in Europe*, pp.62-87. Also see J.W. Young, pp.120-132, and N.J. Crowson, *The Conservative Party and European Integration since 1945: At the Heart of Europe?*, (London: Routledge, 2007), pp.135-190.

<sup>1027</sup> See Gilbert, pp.155-156.

<sup>1028</sup> Author interview with Anthony Teasdale, 20 January 2017.

promoted the benefits of the SEA in their individual constituencies. This again shows that despite relations worsening, Thatcher and the MEPs continued to work together.

In 1988 the European Parliament attempted to implement the SEA which had an impact on the annual budget. The budget in 1988 was also an example that showed Plumb's complicated relationship with the European Parliament due to his various roles. This budget was particularly difficult due to the reforms that occurred to Community finances under the SEA. Thus, the budget was delayed by almost five months because of the reforms which were known as the Delors One Package, which was meant to streamline the annual budget process.<sup>1029</sup> An institutional agreement which included the European Parliament, Council, and the Commission would eventually be signed on 29 June 1988. Under this agreement strict rules were laid out that would reinforce the budgetary discipline and fix financial perspectives from 1988 to 1992.<sup>1030</sup> The agreement set the limit on how far expenditure could increase over one year. Furthermore, the growth rate for agricultural goods was capped at 75 per cent of the growth rate of the Community. The Delors One package aimed at making the Community self-sufficient. Thus, member states would have to make a payment to the Community based on their GNP. The European Parliament and EDG supported the £28.44 billion budget, but this was delayed as the European Parliament had to implement the reforms.<sup>1031</sup> Having a general consensus in the European Parliament on the budget was extremely rare but suggests that Delors' reforms had an instant positive effect within it.

MEPs formally agreed to the budget in a vote on 19 May 1988, but instructed Plumb not to sign it off until he was satisfied that there was a balance between Community expenditure and revenue.<sup>1032</sup> The recommendation was made by European Parliament officials as they

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<sup>1029</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Delors One Package interinstitutional reforms, 30 June 1988.

<sup>1030</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1031</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/11/60, European Conservative Brief: The Single European Act, 23 May 1988.

<sup>1032</sup> Ibid.



wanted more powers from the Delors One package.<sup>1033</sup> The decision had repercussions for the relationship between the EDG and the Conservative Party. Thatcher had initially opposed the intergovernmental conference, as well as the growing influence of the European Parliament, a view held since 1975. But with Delors pushing for reforms she became increasingly hostile towards the Community, which culminated in the Bruges Speech in 1988.<sup>1034</sup> Plumb was in a unique position, as he had become the president of the European Parliament in 1987, was a Lord and also the leader of the EDG.<sup>1035</sup> Hence he had to balance the interests of the European Parliament and as a Conservative Peer in the House of Lords.<sup>1036</sup> Plumb struggled to balance these responsibilities and, as a result, MEPs' relations began to become more strained with Thatcher, particularly after the 1988 Bruges speech.

In 1988 the European Parliament began to use more of its powers as it attempted to implement the SEA and increase its influence in the Community. Under the SEA's second reading, agreements made with third countries required a majority vote (260 seats) in the European Parliament.<sup>1037</sup> Because of this, the EDG emphasised the need for closer cooperation between the groupings.<sup>1038</sup> This happened primarily through the EPP and the Socialists working closer together. However, a by-product of this was that the EDG became less influential on account of its small size. With the expansion of the European Parliament, the EDG had to rely on close relations with the EPP to achieve its goals. Despite this lack of influence in the hemicycle voting process, the EDG did have some influence through the work it did in committees. For example, Christopher Jackson, who had been a MEP since 1979, chaired the Spokesmen Committee which resolved issues around voting in the European Parliament. He stated that it was clear that since 1979 there had been an attempt by

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<sup>1033</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1034</sup> The Bruges Speech will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

<sup>1035</sup> His election and Christopher Prout becoming the delegation's leader will be discussed later in the following chapter.

<sup>1036</sup> H. Plumb, *The Plumb Line: A Journey through Agriculture and Politics*, p.127.

<sup>1037</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/9/33, European Democratic Group: Staff Guide, 18 October 1988.

<sup>1038</sup> Ibid.

the European Parliament ‘to increase its powers and influence’,<sup>1039</sup> a policy pursued by the European Parliament since British accession. After the SEA, MEPs generally had more authority in the Community, which was particularly the case for those who belonged to large groupings. The Conservative government was resistant to these developments as it was still not in favour of seeing a strong European Parliament.

However, in 1988 the general public’s views differed from those of the government. Market Opinion Research International (MORI) conducted research regarding the Community at the request of the EDG, as European elections drew closer. The results showed that 48 per cent of those who polled wanted to remain in the Community, while 39 per cent wished to leave.<sup>1040</sup> In 1984, 55 per cent had wanted to leave, showing the increase in domestic support for the Community since then. Regarding the European Parliament specifically, 87 per cent did not know their constituency MEP with a mere eight per cent being able to name them correctly.<sup>1041</sup> The opinion poll demonstrated to the EDG that MEPs would have to do more for their constituencies. This was compounded by the fact that the poll also showed that 62 per cent of the public wished to learn more about the European Parliament. 1988 was an important year for the European Parliament. Its decision-making powers had increased, in spite of members of the French, German, and British governments opposing a stronger European Parliament. As outlined by Christopher Jackson, the European Parliament was acting quickly to implement the SEA and pushed to gain more influence. The EDG-commissioned poll showed that British Conservative MEPs would have to raise awareness of the European Parliament and themselves before the European elections. The poll again demonstrates a disconnection between British politics and the European Parliament despite the SEA increasing the European Parliament’s influence.

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<sup>1039</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, C. Jackson, *Financial Times*, ‘The European Parliament is Taking Advantage of Its New Powers’, 25 January 1988.

<sup>1040</sup> IPSOS-MORI Archive, The European Community in 1988, 3 March 1989.

<sup>1041</sup> Ibid.

Yet by 1989 the European Parliament was becoming a stronger Community institution, and this was reflected in higher MEP attendance. Pre-1987, the average attendance was below 220; after 1988 the average was well over 300 MEPs.<sup>1042</sup> The increase in attendance was a direct impact of the SEA as the European Parliament had more responsibilities. However, it meant there was a need for MEPs and their staff to travel to Brussels more often to work with other institutions, which many EDG members believed wasted time.<sup>1043</sup> Additionally, all of the European Parliament's committee work occurred in Brussels and under the SEA these committees had an increased workload. The amount of travelling was extremely costly with estimates being £18-23 million a year.<sup>1044</sup> Due to this British Conservative MEPs wanted to move some of the European Parliament's personnel to Brussels permanently. They did this through a motion led by Derek Prag, who was the EDG deputy chairman and also worked in the European Parliament's Institutional Affairs Committee as the grouping's spokesperson. The vote was opposed strongly by Luxembourg and France who both felt that this was the first step for the site of the European Parliament to be eventually moved to a single location.<sup>1045</sup> The Conservatives however, managed to gain support from the EPP and Liberal groupings.<sup>1046</sup> The resolution was passed by 222 votes to 172 and meant that France and Luxembourg would have to relocate almost two thousand staff to Brussels.<sup>1047</sup> The vote demonstrated how the European Parliament had developed, and how the Conservative MEPs understood voting in the European Parliament, given the small size of the EDG.

The EDG understood that it would receive support from the EPP to move staff to Brussels. The EPP had wanted the European Parliament to be housed in Brussels as it felt it could allow it to work more closely with other Community institutions who also had a large

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<sup>1042</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1043</sup> Michael Welsh diary entry, 17th July 1987.

<sup>1044</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, D. Buchan, *Financial Times*, 'MEPs Vote to Transfer Key Staff to Brussels', 19 January 1989.

<sup>1045</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1046</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1047</sup> Ibid.

presence in Brussels.<sup>1048</sup> However, support from other groupings would be subject to the EDG voting in favour of them on other matters. Hence it would be more beneficial for the EDG to rely on one large grouping like the EPP rather than a combination of smaller ones. William Riker refers to this as ‘minimum-winning’, which became more apparent to the EDG in the mid- to late-1980s.<sup>1049</sup> Another tactic the EDG began to implement was to ensure that roll-call voting occurred.<sup>1050</sup> Roll-calling held MEPs accountable and there was no anonymity involved. The EDG controlled a mere 3.3 per cent of the votes in the European Parliament, and thus had to employ strategic measures to ensure certain votes went in its favour as the European Parliament became a more important institution.<sup>1051</sup> However, reliance on other groupings including the EPP became more difficult. The EPP had been somewhat supportive of the EDG, and some EDG members even hoped that a future merger of the groups was a real prospect. The activities of the EDG are consonant with Riker’s account as they demonstrate how a small grouping like the EDG attempts to gain influence in the European Parliament through the ‘minimum-winning’ tactic.

In the 1990s, the Community remained a key area of concern for the Conservative Party. The 1989 European elections had reduced the number of Conservative MEPs to 32.<sup>1052</sup> However, ‘virtually all down to the last man were very pro-European.’<sup>1053</sup> Furthermore, many of the remaining Conservative MEPs were in their third terms, including Amédée Turner, Peter Price, Michael Welsh, and Christopher Prout these MEPs were well established within the European Parliament having such vast experience. Yet Diane Elles, as will be seen, was a large loss to the delegation. Moreover, the result of the 1989 European elections united the Conservative MEPs in their opposition to the views on the Community of Thatcher and the

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<sup>1048</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>1049</sup> W. Riker, p.71.

<sup>1050</sup> Michael Welsh diary entry, 17 July 1987.

<sup>1051</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/11/62, European Conservative Brief No. 1, 1 September 1989.

<sup>1052</sup> The European Elections are discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>1053</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

Conservative Party. The senior Conservatives felt, however, that it was important that the relationship between MEPs and MPs improved or they faced the potential of losing another election.<sup>1054</sup> A reshuffle occurred in the Conservative Party in order to make it more electable in the next election.

Kenneth Baker, who had been loyal to Thatcher, was appointed party chairman in July 1989, and at the beginning of 1990 he attempted to bridge the gap between MEPs and MPs. Baker stated in a BBC interview that he would organise a meeting between MEPs and MPs to improve relations and provide a more coherent policy towards the Community.<sup>1055</sup> However, at the December 1989 European Council meeting Thatcher was unsupportive of Community developments.<sup>1056</sup> Despite her support for the SEA, she had grown to oppose the flanking policies that accompanied it; as noted by Nicholas Crowson, the SEA ‘expanded rather than consolidate its remit’ of the Community.<sup>1057</sup> Thatcher had also spoken against the free movement of people, stating that it was a nation’s right to manage its borders, fearing the prospect of illegal immigration, drugs, and terrorism.<sup>1058</sup> She had also opposed the development of the social dimension of the Community. Her decision led to some MEPs growing more hostile towards Thatcher: Peter Price, who had been a MEP since 1979, openly criticising her. He stated that she had displayed a ‘negative’ approach to the Community which damaged the reputation of the British Conservatives.<sup>1059</sup> Baker also made little effort to communicate with MEPs, as seen by the fact that there are limited archival records showing him interacting with MEPs, barring one study day which occurred in late October 1990 to facilitate interaction between MEPs and MPs.<sup>1060</sup> The growing gap between the two were

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<sup>1054</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/11/62, European Conservative Brief No. 1, 1 September 1989.

<sup>1055</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Times*, ‘Communication between MPs and Euro MPs collide’, 17 September 1989.

<sup>1056</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/5/15, Thatcher Speech to Conservative Central Council, 18 March 1989.

<sup>1057</sup> N. J. Crowson, pp.60-90.

<sup>1058</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1059</sup> P. Stephens, *Financial Times*, ‘Baker seeks peace with MEPs’, 3 January 1990.

<sup>1060</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/5/15, MEPs study days, 15 October 1990.

shown when MEPs at this study day spoke strongly in favour of monetary union and a single European currency which many Conservative MPs opposed.<sup>1061</sup> Baker earlier in the year had outlined his own view. He reiterated this at the study day, suggesting that the government supported monetary union and that Britain would enter when the right conditions were met. He went on to state that the British government did not support a federal Europe.<sup>1062</sup> Inevitably, this study day, as with similar attempts to bridge the gap between Strasbourg and London, was ineffective. Moreover, Baker's comments earlier in the year had publicly displayed the disagreements and disunity the Community was causing the party. Thus, it can be seen the relationship between the MEPs and MPs quickly deteriorated in this period between 1988 and 1990.

Furthermore, during this period German reunification became a pressing concern. Helmut Kohl, the West German Chancellor, had initially constructed a five-year plan to unify East and West Germany, a plan that was similar to nineteenth-century German unification, as observed by Tony Judt.<sup>1063</sup> It meant that the two countries would be joined by a single currency, and political union would follow. However, due to East Germany's public outcry for unification, it was required more urgently. Hence Kohl had to strengthen his case for unifying Germany and expedite its timetable. Internationally, however, unification was opposed by all major powers apart from the US. Judt observes that many nations had grown accustomed to the arrangements regarding Germany and did not want this to change.<sup>1064</sup> Berger and Laporte note that Thatcher was 'worried about the implications of reunification'.<sup>1065</sup> Again this was not a view that was shared by Conservative MEPs. The European Parliament was unanimously in favour of unification. The EPP urged that a

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<sup>1061</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1062</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1063</sup> T. Judt, *Post-War: A History of Europe since 1945*, (London: Pimlico, 2007), p.636.

<sup>1064</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1065</sup> S. Berger and N. LaPorte, *Friendly Enemies: Britain and the GDR 1949-1990*, (New York: Berghahn, 2010), p.293.

European stability fund should be created for East Berlin to provide time and money to facilitate it.<sup>1066</sup> But the EDG warned of the problems of a ‘hasty’ unification, despite supporting it.<sup>1067</sup> Thatcher increasingly became hostile towards the idea of a unified Germany and the impact this would have on the Community, which again worsened relations with Conservative MEPs and distanced them from the wider party. At this stage little was discussed with Thatcher who had become more dismissive of the Community. What had further damaged the link between MEPs and Thatcher was that Diane Elles was no longer a MEP. Elles had decided not to stand in the 1989 European Elections which was a blow to the MEP delegation.<sup>1068</sup> Elles, as seen on previous issues, was able to discuss matters regarding foreign policy with Number Ten officials, Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials and Thatcher.<sup>1069</sup> With Elles no longer an MEP a gap had clearly been created.

Unlike Britain however, France changed its policy regarding unification. Tony Judt observes that Mitterrand saw that unification after 1989 was inevitable regardless of any opposition, be it from Britain or the Soviet Union.<sup>1070</sup> Because of this, Mitterrand suggested that France would support unification but at a price: namely, concessions in the Community. Kohl was willing to concede on a number of minor matters to ensure cordial relations with France.<sup>1071</sup> Fundamentally, Mitterrand wanted the Community’s foundation to be on a Franco-German alliance, a matter Britain would have to deal with consistently in its relationship with the Community. As observed by Nicholas Crowson this frustrated Thatcher as she was ‘unwilling to play a secondary role to the Franco-German axis.’<sup>1072</sup> On a more immediate level, the relationship between Conservative MEPs and Thatcher worsened again over

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<sup>1066</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament plenary session, 13 February 1990.

<sup>1067</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, D, Buchan, *Financial Times*, ‘Europe MPs back early unity for two Germanys’, 15 February 1990.

<sup>1068</sup> Michael Welsh diary entry, 12 January 1990.

<sup>1069</sup> As seen with the Northern Ireland and Falklands reports.

<sup>1070</sup> T. Judt, *Post-War: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Pimlico 2007), p.638.

<sup>1071</sup> Ibid. An example of the concessions Kohl made was allowing Jacques Attali, Mitterrand’s personal economic advisor, to be the chair of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

<sup>1072</sup> Crowson, p.131.

reunification as there was little communication, unlike in the past. Poor communication on central foreign policy issues occurred because of the loss of Diane Elles as a MEP. Because of this, a gap would continue to grow causing tensions within the Conservative Party until Thatcher was replaced by John Major.

Delors' policy on German reunification was consistent with Mitterrand's, and he also saw it as an opportunity for the Community to expand and deepen integration. In 1990 he pressed for the European Commission to have more powers, particularly over decision-making.<sup>1073</sup> He also wanted the European Parliament to have more legislative powers to counterbalance the increased powers of the Commission. Delors was firmly committed to making a new 'institutional framework' as German reunification would strain the Community.<sup>1074</sup> He wanted to have an economic and political dialogue with Eastern European countries after reunification was completed, which would eventually lead to the Community expanding into Eastern Europe. Eastern European enlargement, however, would pose many economic and political problems for the Community and potentially slow down the decision-making process. Anneli Albi has argued that eastward expansion was contested by France, Germany, and Britain as they felt a sharp increase in their contributions to the Community would be required to counterbalance the unstable economies of Eastern European nations.<sup>1075</sup> The British government was quick to dismiss Delors' views stating that it was premature to make assumptions regarding German reunification or the need to develop the Commission's role. The British Conservative government still wanted the Council of Ministers to have the final say on Community matters.<sup>1076</sup> Despite British views, most member states wanted to see a deeper commitment to political union as they saw it as a natural step that should follow the

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<sup>1073</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, Meeting of the Council (General Affairs), 12 February 1990.

<sup>1074</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1075</sup> A. Albi, *EU Enlargement and the Constitutions of Central and Eastern Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.9-14.

<sup>1076</sup> P. Salmon, (ed), *Documents on British Foreign Policy: German Unification, 1989-90*, (Cambridge: Margaret Thatcher Foundation: 18 January, 2010), pp 215-219.



completion of the single market. In contrast to the Conservative government, Conservative MEPs were more supportive of political union and German reunification, again creating tensions between the party and the MEPs. Again, these tensions were worsened due to the loss of Diane Elles as a MEP. In terms of Eastern European expansion, Britain, France, and Germany wanted stricter conditions for accession.

The location of the EP was a continuous problem dating back to the signing of the Treaty of Rome.<sup>1077</sup> Peter Price, the British Conservative MEP, had chaired the seating group of the European Parliament from 1989 to 1994. The matter began to surface again in 1990. By then, the EP's plenary sessions were held in Strasbourg on a monthly basis, committee work took place in Brussels, and the secretariat general headquarters was in Luxembourg. Enrico Vinci, the European Parliament's Secretary General, had argued for Brussels speeding up its construction of a building for the European Parliament. Moreover, by 1990, 600 out of 3,300 secretariat staff worked in Brussels.<sup>1078</sup> The site of the European Parliament worried both France and Luxembourg who, for financial reasons, wanted the European Parliament to conduct its work in their countries. Both attempted to appease MEPs because of this, providing colour TVs and new fax machines.<sup>1079</sup> Following the staff move, France changed tack and wanted the hosting of plenary sessions in Strasbourg to be written into the Community treaties.<sup>1080</sup> Regarding the future of the site of the European Parliament, French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas argued that unanimity was required. MEPs also suggested that France blocked other matters, including the creation of the European Environmental agency, in the European Parliament until Strasbourg was confirmed as the location for

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<sup>1077</sup> As seen in the introduction.

<sup>1078</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *Financial Times*, 'Opportunity to Decide Single Site for European Parliament Missed', 27 September. 1991.

<sup>1079</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1080</sup> Ibid.

plenary sessions.<sup>1081</sup> Conservative MEPs maintained that Brussels should be the site as it already housed the Commission. The EDG thus moved to table a motion that wanted the European Parliament to move entirely to Brussels.<sup>1082</sup> The resolution is significant as it was made with little consultation with Westminster.<sup>1083</sup> However, it was narrowly voted down, to the relief of French officials.<sup>1084</sup>

The location of the European Parliament continued to be a problem throughout the early 90s until it was resolved in 1992. The matter was sensitive mainly because of the financial incentives it offered France, Luxembourg, and Belgium. It also demonstrates the problems of unanimous decision-making. The EDG resolution is of importance as it shows a departure from the policy in the late 1970s. The policy since Thatcher became Prime Minister was led by Westminster, which wanted no firm commitment on a site as the matter could be used as a bargaining chip for other negotiations.<sup>1085</sup> The resolution in 1990 was made by the EDG, who continued to act more independently from Westminster in the later stages of Thatcher's premiership. The decision by MEPs to act more autonomously had also occurred because after the 1989 European Election. Many EDG members were now third-term MEPs and felt that they did not need strong support from Westminster.<sup>1086</sup> The resolution demonstrates how strained MEP and MP relations had become with Thatcher during the latter part of her tenure.

Major, who had replaced Thatcher as leader, demonstrated that he was more willing to work with the Community than his predecessor. John Young states that by approaching the Community in a 'genuinely *communautaire* manner' he could safeguard British interests in Maastricht negotiations.<sup>1087</sup> An example of this was when he proposed Britain switch to PR

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<sup>1081</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>1082</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, EDG motion on site of the European Parliament, 25 September. 1990.

<sup>1083</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>1084</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1085</sup> See section one, MEPs in the European Parliament.

<sup>1086</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>1087</sup> J. W. Young, p.161.

voting in time for the 1994 European elections.<sup>1088</sup> Major and the Conservative MEPs believed this was the right course of action to take as it aligned Britain with other member states without having to concede on vital issues regarding monetary or political union.<sup>1089</sup> However, the Conservative Party wholly rejected the idea of moving to PR for Westminster elections. As observed by Philip Norris, electoral reform was a difficult subject often brought up by the party in opposition.<sup>1090</sup> The government and opposition had to balance the representation of smaller parties against winning seats themselves. Yet Major had selected PR as an issue because it gained the support of the Conservative MEPs and the Community. Moreover, the lack of interest in the subject by the British public meant it would not damage him in a general election.<sup>1091</sup> Thus the EP with its Conservative MEPs was a forum in which Major could show his diplomatic style and disassociate himself from Thatcher.

1991 was dominated by the Maastricht negotiations. The objective of this treaty was to extend the Community's remit into areas of criminal justice and foreign policy. It also aimed to broadly extend powers over social issues, including law enforcement, immigration, and asylum. Neil Nugent has summarised the factors that had led to the Maastricht Treaty, suggesting that Delors understood a social dimension was required if economic and monetary union was to be successful. Nugent also argues that mechanisms needed to be put in place to cope with concerns arising from dismantled borders.<sup>1092</sup> Anthony Forster sets out the British strategy from the outset. He suggests that from the beginning, Major had told Kohl he could not accept a social chapter, nor a single European currency.<sup>1093</sup> The idea of rejecting Maastricht was considered by the Conservative government. The case was strengthened as the Danish government was also very pessimistic on Maastricht: like Britain, it did not want

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<sup>1088</sup> P. Norris, 'The Politics of Electoral Reform in Britain', *International Political Science Review*, 16.1 (1995), pp. 65-78.

<sup>1089</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/10/16, Robert Jackson future of the European Union, 13 September 1991.

<sup>1090</sup> P. Norris, pp.65-78.

<sup>1091</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/10/16, Robert Jackson future of the European Union, 13 September 1991.

<sup>1092</sup> N. Nugent, p.55.

<sup>1093</sup> A. Forster, *Britain and the Maastricht Negotiations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 1999), pp.21-46.

to accept the single currency, and defence was covered by NATO. Denmark would thus hold a referendum on the treaty in 1992.<sup>1094</sup> The matter was also controversial in France. There was hostility towards Maastricht from the left of the political spectrum with the French Communist party, Revolutionary Communist League, and Worker's Struggle all opposing the treaty.<sup>1095</sup> They saw it as a drive towards neoliberalism. All these factors put immense pressure on French President Mitterrand as Delors was pushing for Maastricht to succeed. Due to these divisions, France too was to hold a referendum on the treaty in 1992. It appeared, therefore, that the Maastricht Treaty would not be ratified by all member states. Moreover, the European Commission understood that concessions would have to be granted to individual member states if any form of treaty ratification was to occur.

Yet there were others who were supportive of Maastricht. Conservative MEPs were especially keen and wanted to be part of the single currency.<sup>1096</sup> As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Major had worked closely with the Treasury's Second Permanent Secretary Nigel Wicks. By 1991 Wicks had engaged with the Conservative Party and the general public regarding their views on the Community. Chris Pilkington observes that it was Wicks who proposed to Major the idea of opting out of aspects of Maastricht.<sup>1097</sup> It was a strategy previously used by Callaghan as Prime Minister in 1979. Callaghan had committed to the EMS but opted out of the ERM. It was an ideal solution as Major was willing to accept what Kohl wanted regarding the introduction of the EMU, but to remain outside of the single currency and social chapter. It was on this basis that Major began negotiations with the Community in 1991.

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<sup>1094</sup> For more on Denmark and the EU see, D. Miles and A. Wivel, eds, *Denmark and the European Union* (London: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>1095</sup> See M. Sutton, *France and the Construction of Europe, 1944-2007*, (New York: Barghahn Books, 2007), pp.237-261.

<sup>1096</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/10/16, Robert Jackson future of the European Union, 13 September 1991.

<sup>1097</sup> C. Pilkington, *Britain in the European Union* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p.49.

Conservative MEPs were also consulted on the matter, Major working closely with Christopher Prout who remained the chair of the EDG as it transitioned into the EPP. Prout was a constitutional lawyer, which made him an excellent resource for Major. Moreover, as the two worked together, MEPs in turn had more access to Major through Prout.<sup>1098</sup> Michael Welsh (MEP for Lancashire Central) worked closely with Prout on a number of matters prior to the 1989 European elections. Due to this, Welsh also worked on the Maastricht negotiations.<sup>1099</sup> On the whole, Conservative MEPs felt they had a stronger relationship with Major than with Thatcher. Due to the impending election, Conservatives at Westminster were mute on the Maastricht issue despite Major's biggest concern being party unity. They feared losing their seats if inter-party tensions rose, which freed Major and MEPs to work closely as negotiations developed.

The final Maastricht negotiations began on 11 December 1991 and lasted a total of 31 hours. Neil Nugent has observed that the final form of the treaty was not the tree structure as envisaged by Delors, but rather a three-pillared system. The first pillar included the European Community, under which the European Commission held the powers of initiation, and the Council of Ministers remaining the main decision-making body that could make decisions via QMV.<sup>1100</sup> It also gave an increased scope to the European Parliament.<sup>1101</sup> The second pillar of Maastricht covered the common foreign and security policy, and the third covered home affairs and internal security policies. The second and third pillars were both intergovernmental.<sup>1102</sup> These pillars were purposely left to cover fewer areas as this would allow the majority of the Community's decision-making to remain with the Council of Ministers. There were loose discussions of a fourth pillar regarding defence, but this did not

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<sup>1098</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>1099</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1100</sup> European Parliament Archive, The Maastricht Treaty, 7 February 1992.

<sup>1101</sup> N. Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, (London: Palgrave, 2015), pp.90-100.

<sup>1102</sup> Ibid.

materialise. Dinan, Nugent and Patterson argued for the importance of the Maastricht Treaty, referring to it as ‘the high point of European integration’.<sup>1103</sup> Helen Wallace describes the way in which the treaty fundamentally changed the political system of the Community.<sup>1104</sup> Both accounts highlight the treaty’s importance to the development of the Community. However, Major working with Conservative MEPs, wanted to ensure British interests were safeguarded.

During the negotiations, John Major ensured that Britain gained opt-outs from both the single European currency and the entire social chapter. After the 31-hour negotiations concluded, Kohl made a statement suggesting that the treaty had succeeded in concluding monetary, economic, and political union.<sup>1105</sup> Kohl downplayed Britain’s concession and even suggested that Britain would eventually fully accept Maastricht by 1996.<sup>1106</sup> From a British perspective, John Major had delivered on Maastricht. As he stated in the House of Commons, Maastricht was ‘game, set and match’.<sup>1107</sup> There has been much literature on Major’s success on Maastricht, Hugo Young commenting that upon his return Major was ‘a conquering hero’,<sup>1108</sup> whilst Booker and North describe the praise the British media gave Major.<sup>1109</sup> However, Nicholas Crowson has argued that the opt-outs would later cause economic divisions amongst former Thatcherites.<sup>1110</sup> Yet this literature does not cover the relationship between Conservative MEPs and Major during Maastricht, which had developed positively. Prout had worked with Major on the Maastricht negotiations, thus MEPs’ contribution is also overlooked.

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<sup>1103</sup> D. Dinan, N. Nugent, W.E. Patterson, *The European Union in Crisis*, (London, Palgrave, 2017), p.25.

<sup>1104</sup> H. Wallace and W. Wallace, p.82.

<sup>1105</sup> TNA, PREM 19/3740, European Council Meeting Maastricht, 2 January 1992.

<sup>1106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1107</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 200 cc859-78, 11 December 1991.

<sup>1108</sup> H. Young, *This Blessed Plot from Churchill to Blair*, (London: Macmillan, 1999), p.443.

<sup>1109</sup> C. Booker., R. North., *The Great Deception: Can the European Union Survive?*, (London: Continuum International Publishing 2005), p. 336.

<sup>1110</sup> N.J. Crowson, *The Conservative Party and European Integration since 1945: At the Heart of Europe?*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p.56.

Having won a fourth consecutive general election, discontent over the Community began to grow in the form of the 'Maastricht rebels'. These members of the Conservatives prevented the passing of the Maastricht bill in the House of Commons. Dalibor Rohac has observed that the rebel MPs had a disproportionate amount of influence due to the small majority the government held.<sup>1111</sup> There were 22 rebels, while the Conservative government held a small majority of eighteen seats.<sup>1112</sup> These Eurosceptics had the support of prominent Conservative figures, including Norman Tebbit and Margaret Thatcher, both were in the House of Lords by this point which enhanced their political platform. Thatcher would go on to state that she 'would never have signed that treaty'.<sup>1113</sup> Conservative MEPs wholly opposed this, which again strengthened relations with Major, as many MEPs felt that Major was more receptive to their ideas regarding the Community.<sup>1114</sup>

As seen previously, Maastricht was problematic for other member states including Denmark and France. It was decided by Delors that these matters would be resolved at the European Council meeting in December 1992 scheduled to be held in Edinburgh. Persuading Denmark to agree was vital as without the consent of all member states Maastricht could not be enforced. At the European Council meeting it was decided that Denmark would get opt-outs in four areas which encompassed matters over national citizenship, EMU, defence and home affairs. The first was over citizenship: national citizenship was not replaced by European citizenship.<sup>1115</sup> British Conservative MEPs had been supportive of Denmark over Maastricht as it was in a similar position to Britain.<sup>1116</sup> Maastricht was a landmark treaty which had three broad effects as set out by Tony Judt. The first was the unexpected boost that NATO received. The stricter monetary policies from Maastricht meant that the newly liberated states

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<sup>1111</sup> D. Rohac, *Towards an Imperfect Union: A Conservative Case for the EU*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), p.67.

<sup>1112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1113</sup> MTF, European Community Bill, 7 June 1993.

<sup>1114</sup> CCA, CATH 243, Single Market Implementation Report, 8 June. 1990.

<sup>1115</sup> T. Judt, *Post-War: A History of Europe since 1945*, (London: Pimlico, 2007), pp.716-717.

<sup>1116</sup> CCA, CATH 243, Single Market Implementation Report, 8 June 1990.

of Eastern Europe could not join the Community in the foreseeable future, thus membership of NATO was offered in the interim. It also deferred the problem of Eastern European enlargement. The second effect of Maastricht was that the treaty had brought Community politics to the forefront. This raised public awareness of the European Union in Britain and at Westminster. Lastly, it showed unity amongst Community members and illustrated a commitment to the EU.<sup>1117</sup> Maastricht was a significant moment for the Community and British Conservative MEPs were able to work alongside Major to secure the Conservative government's goals.

The Edinburgh Council of Ministers meeting was dominated by Denmark and Maastricht. However, the matter regarding the location of the European Parliament was also decided. As seen previously, this had been an unresolved issue since the Treaty of Rome. Conservative MEPs were in favour of a move to Brussels where the majority of the European Parliament's staff was already based; more importantly, so was the majority of the European Commission's staff and MEPs were supported by Major on the matter.<sup>1118</sup> However, as mentioned previously, due to the financial incentives attached to housing the European Parliament, Strasbourg, Brussels, and Luxembourg all wanted to be its official seat.<sup>1119</sup> Major wanted to appease both Belgium and France, as well as support his MEPs.<sup>1120</sup> It was eventually agreed at the Edinburgh Council meeting that the work of the Parliament would be split between three locations: the monthly plenary sessions would be held in Strasbourg, committee meetings in Brussels, and Luxembourg would host other European Parliament affairs, as well as holding the European Parliament Archive.<sup>1121</sup> The agreement reached settled the dispute, but many MEPs remained hostile towards the solution. Conservative Lord

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<sup>1117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1118</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/10/31, Ben Patterson and Christopher Jackson: Two futures for the European Parliament, 22 February 1992.

<sup>1119</sup> See section one: Direct Elections, p.107.

<sup>1120</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>1121</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Council Meeting, 15 December 1992.



Bethell wanted the site to be moved to Brussels due to the link it would have to other Community institutions.<sup>1122</sup> The Conservative MEP Andrew Pearce (MEP for Cheshire West and Wirral) also suggested that the site should have remained in Brussels, as the city was ‘the nerve-centre’ of the Community. He also believed that Major could have ensured that the seat remained in Brussels as Major held the EU chairmanship in 1992.<sup>1123</sup> As a whole, the European Parliament was hostile towards the agreement as it felt its fate should have been decided by MEPs and not in a European Council summit. The decision was important as it again demonstrated that the European Council was the final decision-making body despite the European Parliament increasing its powers through the SEA and Maastricht. British Conservative MEPs were disappointed by Major in not securing a move to Brussels, which marked the first disagreement between them.

Overall, the chapter has shown the various contributions made by the MEPs in an extremely turbulent period. Regarding the SEA it is seen that the MEPs who held relationships with Whitehall departments and MPs, attempted to discuss the SEA at Westminster. Many, also with the support of Westminster, promoted the SEA in their local constituencies. However, as Thatcher became more Eurosceptic in her Bruges Speech, the MEPs felt disconnected from the Conservative government. Communication worsened as the loss of Diane Elles was vital, a situation exacerbated by Henry Plumb attempting to balance his various commitments, which contributed to damaging the relationship with Westminster. Yet with the departure of Thatcher, Major was thrown into Maastricht negotiations. Much has been written on this topic, Anthony Forster suggests that Major had to appease both wings of the Conservative Party.<sup>1124</sup> Dalibor Rohac suggests that Major struggled to appease the Eurosceptics and

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<sup>1122</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, R. West, *The Times*, ‘Shape of Europe after Edinburgh’, 17 December 1992.

<sup>1123</sup> A. Pearce, *My Personal Story: In and Out of Europe*, (Kibworth Beauchamp: Matador, 2003), p.64.

<sup>1124</sup> A. Forster, *Britain and the Maastricht Negotiations*, pp.21-46.

focuses specifically on the Maastricht rebels.<sup>1125</sup> Nicholas Crowson concurs with Rohac's account and suggests the opt-outs gained at Maastricht would cause long-term division in the Conservative Party.<sup>1126</sup> Yet Hugo Young highlights the importance of Major's skilful negotiating tactics in securing opt-outs.<sup>1127</sup> Tony Judt shows that most member states had domestic pressures preventing them from agreeing Maastricht.<sup>1128</sup> However, none of these accounts explore the Conservative MEPs' role in Maastricht. This chapter has shown that Major was able to quickly build strong relations with Conservative MEPs, including Christopher Prout, Michael Welsh, and later Amédée Turner, all of whom assisted Major in the negotiations. As seen in the chapter Prout was particularly important and was regularly consulted by Major.

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<sup>1125</sup> D. Rohac, pp.70-114.

<sup>1126</sup> N.J. Crowson, pp.45-71.

<sup>1127</sup> H. Young, *This Blessed Plot from Churchill to Blair*, (London: Macmillan, 1999), p.443.

<sup>1128</sup> T. Judt, pp.710-720.

## **Chapter Ten: Thatcher's resignation, and John Major's relationship with MEPs**

The following chapter will examine the downfall of Thatcher. It will discuss the Westland Affair, how divisions over EMU eventually led to her resignation, and how Conservative MEPs reacted in this period. The chapter will show the positive impact that Major's eventual leadership had on MEPs. Ensuring stability through maintaining relations with Conservative Party members was a fundamental objective of Major when he became Prime Minister. The chapter will show how he successfully achieved this through his relationships with MEPs.

The Westland Affair had caused much controversy and division in the Conservative Party. The matter led to the resignation of Michael Heseltine as Secretary of State for Defence and damaged the reputation of the Conservative government.<sup>1129</sup> It also affected the dynamics between MEPs and the Conservative Party. Westland was a British-based helicopter company which had been in steady decline since the 1980s, being heavily reliant on government contracts. In November 1985 an American company, Sikorsky, made a bid to rescue Westland which Heseltine opposed. Thatcher's view was that Westland's future should be decided by the company and not the government. Heseltine leaked a statement to *The Times*. In it he argued that Westland would risk its future if it were owned by Sikorsky.<sup>1130</sup> A series of Cabinet meetings followed, which Westland Chairman Sir John Cuckney could attend. From these meetings it became clear that Thatcher and Cuckney, who attended a Cabinet meeting on 9 December 1985, were in favour of a US solution, whilst Howe (Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), Lawson (Chancellor of the Exchequer), and Heseltine (Secretary of State for Defence) were in favour of a European solution.<sup>1131</sup>

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<sup>1129</sup> For a detailed examination of the Westland Affair see E. Evans, pp.87-95.

<sup>1130</sup> Ibid, p.89.

<sup>1131</sup> TNA, CAB 128/83/1, Cabinet minutes in full, 6 January 1986.

The matter was also discussed in the European Parliament and 180 MEPs voted in favour of a European solution. More importantly, 31 out of 32 British Conservatives voted in favour.<sup>1132</sup> Margaret Daly, MEP for Somerset and West Dorset (where Westland was based), was vocal on the matter and was supported by Frederick Catherwood.<sup>1133</sup> They argued that the government should support a European project as the 1984 European elections were fought on the grounds of stronger and more coordinated European defences. Yet neither MEP had effectively built relations with MPs or Whitehall departments and thus struggled to influence the government. Moreover, Thatcher did not consider the MEPs' views on the subject as she was swaying towards an Anglo-American project.<sup>1134</sup> Heseltine was unable to convince the Cabinet of a European solution and resigned. Peter Jenkins would later state that Heseltine 'had lost his cool'.<sup>1135</sup> However, the Westland Affair did not conclude there as Leon Brittan who also resigned. Beetham and Weir have argued that more members of Cabinet were beginning to feel that Thatcher was making decisions within 'small and informal groups', which created tensions in Cabinet.<sup>1136</sup> However, many Conservative MEPs opposed the official government/party line which supported a US solution; they also struggled to communicate with the leadership on Westland, thus damaging the relationship between some MEPs (Frederick Catherwood and Margaret Daly) and Thatcher.

During this period Lord Cockfield's term as European Commissioner was due to expire. He had been vital for the SEA and the steps taken towards completing the single market.<sup>1137</sup> Yet his efforts to harmonise VAT were met with scepticism by some members of the Conservatives in London. These members felt that Cockfield, like other Commissioners

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<sup>1132</sup> UOP, European Integration Archive, European Parliament Session, 9 January 1986.

<sup>1133</sup> CCA, CATH 243, Papers of Fredrick Catherwood, 17 February 1986.

<sup>1134</sup> R. Vinen, *Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the Thatcher Era*, (London, Pocket Books, 2009), p.87.

<sup>1135</sup> P. Jenkins, *Mrs Thatcher's Revolution: The Ending of the Socialist Era*, (London: Pan, 1989), p.192.

<sup>1136</sup> S. Weir and D. Beetham, *Political Power and Democratic Control in Britain*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), p.123.

<sup>1137</sup> N. Jabko, *Playing the Market: A Political Strategy for Uniting Europe, 1984-2005*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), p.57.

under Delors, was acting to harmonise too quickly.<sup>1138</sup> They felt that VAT harmonisation should occur naturally and when financially beneficial.<sup>1139</sup> Cockfield, however, was pressing for the completion of the single market because of the deadline of 1992; but Thatcher and other Conservatives were consistently against the idea of deadlines for Community objectives.<sup>1140</sup> Because of Cockfield's inability to accept this advice, both the Treasury and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office opposed a second term for him despite his support amongst Conservatives MEPs.<sup>1141</sup> Thatcher made an effort to engage the MEPs through a letter to Plumb asking for an opinion on Cockfield's tenure.<sup>1142</sup> Yet as a grouping the EDG became more vocal on the matter when rumours began to circulate that Cockfield would be replaced by another Commissioner.<sup>1143</sup> The EDG was supported by the Leader of the House John Wakeham who also wanted Cockfield to remain a Commissioner: another example of divisions within the Conservative Party on European matters.<sup>1144</sup> The issue was not decided until late September 1988 when it was determined by Thatcher that Cockfield would not serve a second term and would be replaced by Leon Brittan.<sup>1145</sup> In 1988 Brittan reluctantly resigned as an MP to take up his post as the European Commissioner for Competition. The EDG was not supportive of the decision nor of the direction in which the Conservative

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<sup>1138</sup> There is little archival information that effectively shows the relationship between Commissioners and MEPs. The archival record that does exist is primarily found in the minutes of European Committee meetings when a Commissioner would attend an EP Committee to provide a response on a particular matter. Oral history was vital for this as it showed that many British Conservative MEPs had informal relations with Commissioners. There were also occasions when joint publications between the Council and European Parliament existed such as the Annual Report on the European Union where there is evidence of British Commissioners working with European MEPs. See UOP, European Integration Archive, Annual Report on the European Union, 19 January 1982.

<sup>1139</sup> N. Jabko, p.60.

<sup>1140</sup> As seen in section one regarding direct elections and powers of the European Parliament. Thatcher had traditionally opposed deadlines for Community matters.

<sup>1141</sup> TNA, LCO 57/641, Lord Cockfield Second term, 7 May 1988.

<sup>1142</sup> Ibid. MT to Henry Plumb, 15 April 1988.

<sup>1143</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/9/33, European Democratic Group, Selection of Commissioners, 4 September 1988.

<sup>1144</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, M. Cassell, *Financial Times*, 'Tories back Cockfield', 9 September 1988.

<sup>1145</sup> Brittan had vast experience in the Conservative government, serving as Home Secretary between 1983 and 1985, and as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry 1985 to 1986, stepping down from this position during the Westland Affair. See E. Evans, *Thatcherism and British Politics, 1975-1999*, (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), pp.87-95.

government was heading.<sup>1146</sup> The episode also meant there was more dissent between the EDG and the Conservative Party at Westminster. It is also clear from this that 1988 was a turning point for the Conservatives as they became increasingly divided on the Community.

Labour had many internal problems which meant that the Conservatives were in a stronger position heading into the 1987 general election. The Conservative manifesto set out the successes the party had in securing Britain rebates from the Community.<sup>1147</sup> It also stated that the Conservatives would continue to play a leading role in the Community as they would continue to work on reforming the CAP. Unlike the 1983 manifesto it also emphasised the importance of their MEPs in ensuring the common market developed in the manner that suited Britain.<sup>1148</sup> Moreover, Plumb was consulted on the manifesto, particularly regarding the element that related to the CAP and the budget contribution.<sup>1149</sup> His role in the manifesto shows his influence in the Conservative Party.

In their manifesto, Labour were less hostile to the Community in comparison to previous years. Labour stated that they would be willing to cooperate with the Community and were willing to work with member states to combat unemployment and expand economically. However, it also suggested that it would fight on matters that affected Britain, namely CAP reform.<sup>1150</sup> The election held on 11 June 1987 saw another Conservative victory with 375 seats, compared to 229 for Labour, and 23 for the SDP-Liberal Alliance.<sup>1151</sup> Labour had improved significantly from the 1983 election, gaining an additional twenty seats. Butler and Kavanagh have argued that one of the underlying reasons Labour lost was because there had been a sharp rise in living standards under the Conservatives.<sup>1152</sup> They also suggest that

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<sup>1146</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>1147</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/9/33, Conservative Party Manifesto, 17 June 1987.

<sup>1148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1149</sup> G. Howe, *Conflict in Loyalty*, (London: Macmillan, 1995), p.482.

<sup>1150</sup> TNA, BN 134/111, Labour Manifesto, 2 June 1987.

<sup>1151</sup> Parliamentary Archive, General Election Results, 11 June 1987.

<sup>1152</sup> D. Butler and D. Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 1987*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p.147.

Labour's performance solidified its position as the second largest party in the UK. Despite winning, the Conservatives lost 22 seats since the 1983 election. Comparing the 1987 election to the previous European elections (1984), it can be seen that the European elections were accurate as a forecasting tool, in terms of both the result and the swing away from the Conservatives.

For the Conservatives in London tensions further arose within Cabinet. Both Howe and Lawson wanted to enter the EMU as the British economy worsened with fears of inflation. The matter of economic and monetary union was to be discussed at the European Council meeting in Madrid (26-27 June 1989). The MEP Christopher Jackson had worked with the Treasury and had attempted to discuss the benefits of the EMU with Thatcher.<sup>1153</sup> However, unlike previous years, Thatcher was less receptive to Jackson's views.<sup>1154</sup> Before the meeting in Madrid both Howe and Lawson threatened to resign if Thatcher did not agree a date before 1992 for Britain to enter the EMS.<sup>1155</sup> At the meeting, Thatcher merely outlined the framework that had to be met before Britain considered joining. Despite this, neither Howe nor Lawson resigned. Thatcher became critical of both after the Council meeting and opted to work more closely with Senior Economic Advisor Alan Walters. Walters had worked with Thatcher since 1983 and strongly opposed British entry to the EMS. A rift immediately arose between Lawson and Walters. Seldon and Collings have argued that the combination of the ERM and Walters had made the post difficult for Lawson, who resigned on 31 October leaving the party more divided.<sup>1156</sup> Lawson's resignation came during a period in which the party began to lose public support. By 1989, it had become more fractured and continued to be so, even after Britain joined the ERM on 8 October 1990. Moreover, Thatcher's

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<sup>1153</sup> TNA, T 566/74, Christopher Jackson report on EMU, 28 March 1988.

<sup>1154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1155</sup> See J. Walsh, *European Monetary Integration & Domestic Politics: Britain, France, and Italy*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000), pp.119-124.

<sup>1156</sup> A. Seldon and D. Collings, *Britain under Thatcher*, (London: Routledge, 2014), p.56.

relationship with the MEPs deteriorated as her views on the Community hardened, as demonstrated by her ineffective communication with Jackson.

The final disagreement between Conservative MEPs and Thatcher was over the ERM. Thatcher had invited the Conservative MEP delegation to Downing Street to ease tensions. The meeting did indeed resolve issues regarding the 1989 European elections and the party was able to move forward.<sup>1157</sup> However, a 90-minute debate ensued regarding monetary union. MEPs argued that the government should have a more positive outlook towards monetary union and the creation of a single European bank. Prout had also suggested that Britain should enter the ERM by the end of 1989.<sup>1158</sup> Thatcher responded by outlining her stance taken at the Madrid European Council meeting, which was that Britain would join under the right conditions.<sup>1159</sup> It meant there was not a timetable to join which frustrated supporters of the ERM. Labour benefited from the internal fighting of the Conservatives, Neil Kinnock stating that the Labour party was now the 'party of Europe'.<sup>1160</sup> In response to the continuous internal disputes, John Major as the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs attempted to appease MEPs. He reinforced what Howe had achieved as the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and attempted to give MEPs more access to Ministers.<sup>1161</sup> Much has been written on EMU during this period. Collings and Seldon suggest Howe and Lawson calculated that if Britain was part of the EMU it could better influence the Community.<sup>1162</sup> Others, such as Shirley Letwin, suggest that Lawson's ineffective management of the British economy made EMU entry seem more favourable to Conservative MPs.<sup>1163</sup> Yet the Conservative MEPs also supported EMU and this was another strand of opposition Thatcher had to contend with, which is overlooked in the literature.

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<sup>1157</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>1158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1160</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Times*, 'Strong Labour support for EEC', 2 February 1988.

<sup>1161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1162</sup> A. Seldon and D. Collings, p.53.

<sup>1163</sup> S. Letwin, p.214.



Moreover, it can be seen that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office under Howe and Major had made efforts to work with the MEPs.

The handling of ERM and EMU policy led to the eventual resignation of Geoffrey Howe as Deputy Prime Minister. Howe was the last Cabinet member remaining from the 1979 Cabinet. His resignation placed even more pressure on Thatcher's leadership, and this came to a head when Heseltine stood against her for the party's leadership. The first-round ballot was won by Thatcher with 50.8% of the vote, with Heseltine winning 40.9%.<sup>1164</sup> However, due to Conservative leadership election rules, a second ballot was required. Upon consulting members of her Cabinet, some, including Malcolm Rifkind and Kenneth Clarke, observed that she could not win, and she resigned on 22 November 1990. Chris Gifford, amongst others, has argued that Howe's resignation had compounded Thatcher's fate as the leader of the party.<sup>1165</sup> The second ballot was fought between John Major, Douglas Hurd, and Michael Heseltine. Conservative MEPs were split evenly between the three candidates.<sup>1166</sup> However, collectively they stated that the leadership race highlighted the need for a change in the party's European policy. John Major won the second ballot with 49.7% of the vote.<sup>1167</sup> The ending of Thatcher's tenure was an historic moment in British history and much has been written about her overall European policy. In his memoirs, Nicholas Ridley indicates that Thatcher successfully defended British interests and had a positive influence in the Community.<sup>1168</sup> Stephen George comments that she established Britain as a 'skilful actor in the Community game'.<sup>1169</sup> David Reynolds argues that Thatcher never faced the public honestly and instead wore a 'mask of patriotic jingoism' to hide the loss of British

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<sup>1164</sup> C. Gifford, *The Making of Eurosceptic Britain: Identity and Economy in a Post-Imperial State*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p.107. Also see Crowson, pp.153-159.

<sup>1165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1166</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>1167</sup> TNA, PREM 19/3213, Conservative leadership ballot, 29 November 1990.

<sup>1168</sup> N. Ridley, *My Style of Government: The Thatcher Years* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), pp.230-270.

<sup>1169</sup> S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain and the Community*, p.127.

sovereignty.<sup>1170</sup> Unlike the accounts mentioned above, this thesis showed her interactions with the MEPs throughout her tenure. It shows Thatcher's pragmatism towards MEPs, as she was willing to work with them on certain matters such as the rebate. She had even supported them on sensitive topics such as increasing the salary of MEPs. However, by 1988 Thatcher had grown more Eurosceptic and this was exacerbated by changes occurring to the MEPs that held strong relationships with her. Diane Elles was a big loss, and Henry Plumb became less accessible due to his various roles, which also contributed to the overall relationship between Thatcher and the MEPs worsening in this period.

The MEPs grew more distant from their Westminster counterparts. The change of leadership drastically altered the dynamics as Major was different to Thatcher. John Young states that 'Major had to prevent the EC issues from upsetting domestic politics.'<sup>1171</sup> He had to balance the difference wings of the Conservative Party, which included the MEPs. Tim Bale suggests that with Thatcher sharing her views with the media regularly, 'Major became more sensitive to what the papers were saying about him but also tried to limit the damage he and others felt Thatcher was doing'.<sup>1172</sup> Whilst Nicholas Crowson stated that Major from the beginning took 'a less antagonistic approach' to the Community'.<sup>1173</sup> He moved quickly to prevent a rift occurring between him and the MEPs and met the delegation on 30 November 1990.<sup>1174</sup> He did this to seek their advice on the forthcoming intergovernmental European meeting which had an immediate positive effect on his relationship with them. Both had left the meeting

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<sup>1170</sup> D. Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (London: Routledge, 2000), p.160.

<sup>1171</sup> J. Young, *Britain and European Unity 1945–92*, (New York, Macmillan, 1992), p.161.

<sup>1172</sup> T. Bale, *From Thatcher to Cameron*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), p.6.

<sup>1173</sup> N.J. Crowson, *The Conservative Party and European Integration since 1945*, (London: Routledge, 2007) p.55.

<sup>1174</sup> TNA, PREM 19/3213, MEP meeting at Number Ten, 30 November 1990.

with a mutual understanding, and both believed they could work with one another moving forward into Maastricht negotiations.<sup>1175</sup>

In 1991 Major's biggest problem was that of party unity over the Community. This was at a time when the negotiations to complete the single market neared, as set out in the Maastricht Treaty. Major made efforts to meet with MEPs regularly and, as seen previously, he developed a strong working relationship with the leader of the EDG, Christopher Prout. Prout was more involved with the Prime Minister than any previous leader of the EDG. Upon reflection, Lord Inglewood stated that: 'Major was much easier to work with. He was more sympathetic when a policy issue went against his position in Westminster, he understood that, but she never did.'<sup>1176</sup> It made management of the MEPs easier for Major as there was little confrontation. However, Major struggled to consolidate the support of the small far-right wing of the party regarding further European integration. Nicholas Ridley, the former Trade Secretary, had challenged Major and wanted to prevent deeper integration at Maastricht. Major attempted to quell this by reiterating his view outlined at the Conservative Party Conference in October 1991: 'Closer union between states. Not a federal merger of states. That is still our policy.'<sup>1177</sup> The comment assisted in easing tensions, but due to the recession and Community problems, the Conservatives were less vocal on the Community ahead of the British general election which took place on 9 April 1992, in order to try and ensure an electoral victory.

In the lead up to the general election matters such as the 1989 European election results, coupled with the ongoing recession meant that many opinion polls predicted a Labour victory.<sup>1178</sup> After the British general election on 12 May 1992 the Queen also spoke at the

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<sup>1175</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>1176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1177</sup> CCA, John Major's Conservative Party Conference Speech, 11 October 1991.

<sup>1178</sup> I. Crewe, *Political Communication the 1992 General Election*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.9.

European Parliament, giving a positive outlook towards the Community. Major was quick to respond to this and ease any internal problems by suggesting British sovereignty was not for sale.<sup>1179</sup> The Conservative manifesto had stated that as the Soviet Union had collapsed, Britain would have to play a leading global role. It suggested that the Conservatives had in the past gained concessions from the Community to protect British interests, as reflected in the Maastricht opt-outs.<sup>1180</sup> On the back of its success in the 1989 European elections, Labour suggested that it was the party of Europe. However, its election campaign focused more on traditional issues such as taxation, jobs in Britain, and healthcare than on Community matters. The results were surprising as the opinion polls were incorrect. The Conservatives won 336 seats, Labour 271, and Liberal Democrats 20. It meant that the Conservatives had won with a small majority.<sup>1181</sup> This was a significant victory for Major. Timothy Heppell argues that it gave Major both ‘authority and legitimacy’.<sup>1182</sup> However, with a small majority, party management became an issue. Moreover, as the Conservatives had won again, it gave Eurosceptics an opportunity to raise concerns over Maastricht more readily.

One of the key events in this period was the withdrawal of Britain from the ERM in September 1992. The ERM was originally created because European businesses wanted exchange rate stability within a narrow band, and it had begun as a political project to deepen integration.<sup>1183</sup> German reunification had, however, come at a heavy price for Germany in the short-term as the country had to quickly re-evaluate wages, as well as consider transformation projects for social services, and communities.<sup>1184</sup> The speed in which reunification had

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<sup>1179</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, R. West, *The Times*, ‘Shape of Europe after Edinburgh’, 17 December 1992.

<sup>1180</sup> CCA, Conservative Party Manifesto, 9 April 1990.

<sup>1181</sup> T. Heppell, *The Conservative Party Leadership of John Major 1992 to 1997*, (London: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), p.19.

<sup>1182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1183</sup> Author interview with John Stevens, 25 March 2015.

<sup>1184</sup> F. Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification*, (London: Berghahn Books, 2009), p.9.

occurred also came as a shock to the EDG.<sup>1185</sup> Many were supportive of having a unified Germany however, some MEPs saw reunification as a Mitterrand led political project to bind Germany within European structures which would satisfy French national interests, these MEPs emphasised reunification should have occurred more slowly.<sup>1186</sup> The end of the Cold War also had an impact on the future of the Community as a number of new Eastern European countries considered membership, however, because of the stricter monetary policies enforced by the Maastricht Treaty it was unlikely these countries could join the Community, however as a result, a number of Eastern European countries would eventually join NATO. Regarding German reunification Leonhard and Funk have observed that it was extremely costly and forced the Bundesbank to raise interest rates in order to counteract inflation.<sup>1187</sup> It strained all members of the ERM. Britain had been experiencing economic difficulties as well as suffering from the weakening of the dollar. Initially, Major attempted to support the pound in order to remain part of the ERM by increasing interest rates and authorising the sale of foreign currency reserves. However, despite these efforts, Sterling slipped below its lower band within the ERM. An emergency Cabinet meeting was held, which included pro-Europeans such as Douglas Hurd, Ken Clarke, and Michael Heseltine and it was decided that Britain could no longer participate in the ERM and it withdrew.<sup>1188</sup> The aftermath was economically devastating as high German interest rates forced Britain into a recession. The ERM crisis would damage the Conservative Party and cause internal disputes for years to come.

British businesses began to struggle, and the housing market crashed. What became known as ‘Black Wednesday’ was referred to as ‘White Wednesday’ by ardent Eurosceptics. They felt

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<sup>1185</sup> Author interview with Baroness Rawlings, 1 December 2016.

<sup>1186</sup> Ibid. For more on German Reunification and France see: F. Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification*, (London: Berghahn Books, 2009), p.18.

<sup>1187</sup> J. Leonhard and L. Funk, *Ten years of German Unification: Transfer, Transformation, Incorporation?* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2002), p.235.

<sup>1188</sup> H. D. Clarke and others, *Political Choice in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.60.

they had regained economic control from the Community. Harold Clarke suggests that this event had a major impact on public opinion and the Conservatives, damaging the long-term legacy of the party.<sup>1189</sup> Nicholas Crowson argues that 'it undermined the party's reputation'.<sup>1190</sup> Tim Bale also observes that Major 'barely had enough time to setup a Cabinet before he was hit broadside with Black Wednesday'.<sup>1191</sup> The ERM crisis proved there was no halfway house between free-floating and fixed exchange rates. Britain and the Conservatives became more pessimistic about Europe as a result of the ERM crisis. However, other nations such as Italy came out of the crisis hoping to deepen integration, with which Conservative MEPs agreed. Major met with the MEPs to discuss the matter and many felt he was 'receptive to the ideas of the delegation'.<sup>1192</sup> Many MEPs, including Christopher Jackson, felt that EMU still offered price transparency as well as improving trade with other member states.<sup>1193</sup> Upon reflection some MEPs feel that the ERM crisis had made the advent of the Euro possible.<sup>1194</sup> Regardless, the meeting again shows that Major had prioritised meeting with MEPs, demonstrating that he saw value in collaboration with the delegation.

Overall this chapter shows that Thatcher's relationship with the MEP delegation worsened, as demonstrated by the Westland affair and the meeting regarding EMU. On both subjects the MEPs opposed Thatcher's views. However, the 1987 manifesto shows the influence certain MEPs held as Plumb was consulted regularly on matters regarding the CAP. The change of leadership to Major was a significant moment. Many historians have suggested that Major had to balance the varying views of his party to ensure unity. John Young states that Major had to 'prevent EC issues upsetting domestic politics',<sup>1195</sup> while Nicholas Crowson argued that despite the opt-outs secured at Maastricht, Major still struggled to appease the different

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<sup>1189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1190</sup> N.J. Crowson, p.166.

<sup>1191</sup> T. Bale, *The Conservative Party: From Thatcher to Cameron*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), p.45.

<sup>1192</sup> Michael Welsh personal diary, diary entry, 22 October 1992.

<sup>1193</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/7/10, Meeting with John Major, 25 October 1992.

<sup>1194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1195</sup> J.W. Young, p.161.

wings of the Conservative Party.<sup>1196</sup> This chapter adds to these accounts as the MEPs were also a group within the Conservative Party that Major successfully worked with as their pro-European outlook were similar to Major's. Major, as seen from this and the previous chapter, regularly worked with the MEPs on matters ranging from Maastricht negotiations to the ERM crisis. His actions led to strong relations developing with the MEP delegation which was a success of John Major's premiership that is often overlooked.

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<sup>1196</sup> N.J. Crowson, p.56.

## Chapter Eleven: EDG and EPP merger

The following chapter will explore the relationship between the EDG and EPP, which culminated in the merger of the two groupings. It will also discuss the successes of the EDG, including Henry Plumb becoming President of the European Parliament, and Spanish members joining the grouping. However, it will also discuss the impact the Conservatives at Westminster had on the EDG through the 1989 European elections, and the replacement of Plumb as leader by Christopher Prout. The chapter will demonstrate that there was a window of opportunity to join the EPP (from Thatcher's resignation on 23 November 1990 until the ERM crisis on 16 September 1992) which Prout was able to exploit for the merger, showing that the EPP was not the natural home for the EDG and that it was under fortuitous circumstances that a merger occurred.

In 1986 Spain and Portugal formally became members of the Community, marking the third round of enlargement. Manuel and Royo have argued that Iberian enlargement was put on hold throughout the 1980s due to fears of immigration.<sup>1197</sup> Yet the accession of both nations also had an impact on the Community's relationship with the US, which feared it would mark a decline in trading with the Community. They even demanded that bilateral trade agreements should be made between themselves and the Community prior to formal accession, a view totally opposed by the Community. Additionally, MEPs were very vocal; even Plumb stated in an interview that 'the USA must be challenged'.<sup>1198</sup> The matter was also discussed in Cabinet as the Anglo-US relationship was of great importance. Howe argued that the US position was ill informed. Like other member states, he believed that the US would benefit from enlargement, and that despite the US potentially losing out in agriculture, this would be

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<sup>1197</sup> P.C. Manuel, S. Royo., *Spain and Portugal in the European Union: The First Fifteen Years*, (London: Frank Cass, 2005), p.255.

<sup>1198</sup> BUFVC, Sir Henry Plumb interview, 5 January 1986.



compensated by a gain in industrial trade.<sup>1199</sup> By March 1986 the US position began to change following a meeting in Washington between the British Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Michael Jopling, and Washington officials.<sup>1200</sup> The US then began to support enlargement on a political level and admitted they had miscalculated the its effects. Moreover, with enlargement formally complete the EDG had increased in size with the addition of Spanish members. This was a major success under Plumb as the EDG gained credibility by becoming a more diverse grouping.

An election for the European Parliament presidency was held in 1987 and was contested between Plumb and the Spanish MEP Enrique Baron Crespo. Crespo had been the Minister of Transport for Spain and was the Socialist grouping's candidate.<sup>1201</sup> The 1987 election was also the first in which small groupings ran for the presidency. Marco Pannella, the Italian MP and leader of the Radical Party, was in the running, as was the Greens' candidate, Paul States, a member of the Belgium Ecology Party. Plumb was the favourite as he had the support of all the centre-right groupings in the European Parliament which would amount to 273 votes out of 518.<sup>1202</sup> But as the election drew closer, the EDG feared that Plumb would not win all these votes as many across Europe saw him as 'Thatcher's man in Europe'.<sup>1203</sup> Many Continental MEPs were frustrated by Thatcher because they felt she had been an obstacle in the development of the European Parliament as a Community institution.<sup>1204</sup> During her tenure she had wanted decision-making powers to reside within the Council of Ministers. Her views led to an evident anti-British feeling in the European Parliament. Some centre-right groupings had confirmed the EDG's fears as the Liberals stated that they would vote against

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<sup>1199</sup> TNA, CAB, 129/220/2, Howe letter to Thatcher memorandum, 9 January 1986.

<sup>1200</sup> Ibid, M. Jopling memorandum, 13 January 1986.

<sup>1201</sup> TNA, FCO 30/6702, European Parliament: European Democratic Group; possible election of Sir Henry Plumb as President, 9 December 1986.

<sup>1202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1203</sup> BUFVC, Sir Henry Plumb becomes European Parliament President Interview, 8 January 1987.

<sup>1204</sup> TNA, FCO 30/6702, European Parliament: European Democratic Group; possible election of Sir Henry Plumb as President, 9 December 1986.

Plumb, accounting for 41 votes.<sup>1205</sup> The EDG felt that Marco Pannella was a potential threat because of the anti-British sentiment amongst MEPs. In his presidency bid, Plumb also had regular communication and support from Number Ten and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.<sup>1206</sup> It again demonstrates that some MEPs (Henry Plumb, Christopher Jackson, Diane Elles, and Christopher Prout) were able to collaborate and work alongside MPs. They were able to build these relations as the European Parliament committees they worked on covered matters central to the Conservative government or because they were the leader of the Conservative MEP delegation.

On 5 January 1987 Plumb succeeded in becoming the first British elected president of the European Parliament.<sup>1207</sup> This was a great achievement for both Plumb and the EDG. In his opening remarks, Plumb stated that he was ‘born an Englishman but would die a European’.<sup>1208</sup> His presidency marked the second major success in his leadership of the EDG within two years, the first being the inclusion of Spanish members in the EDG. In his memoirs, Plumb stated that winning the presidency was ‘the crowning moment’ in his political career.<sup>1209</sup> These were both areas where Scott-Hopkins had been ineffective, as he failed to convince Greek MEPs to join the EDG and failed in his attempt to become president of the European Parliament.<sup>1210</sup> Under the leadership of Plumb, therefore, the EDG gained more credibility. With both a multinational composition and a president of the European Parliament, the EDG had made inroads in bridging the gap between themselves and other large groupings. Due to his farming background, Plumb had very close relations with EPP members which dated back to 1970 when he was president of the NFU. As a result, many

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<sup>1205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1206</sup> See TNA, FCO 30/6702 European Parliament Presidency election, 5 August 1987.

<sup>1207</sup> The president of the European Parliament held great influence as he/she presented the views of the European Parliament in European Council meetings. The president also met with the president of the Commission and Council once a month and signed off on the EU budget. See J.M. Palayret, *Building Parliament: 50 Years of European Parliament History 1958-2008*, (Belgium: European Communities, 2009), pp.33-50.

<sup>1208</sup> BUFVC, Sir Henry Plumb becomes European Parliament President Interview, 8 January 1987.

<sup>1209</sup> H. Plumb, *A Journey through Agriculture and Politics*, (Oxford, Greycoat Press, 2001), p.137.

<sup>1210</sup> See section three, pp.146-150.

EPP members felt that Plumb was more approachable on matters that were sensitive to Britain such as the CAP.<sup>1211</sup> His relationship with the EPP had been vital for his presidency election in 1987.

In March 1987 Plumb was awarded a life peerage. This, however, was a complex matter as British Conservative MEPs and continental MEPs viewed the award differently. The former felt it was not only recognition for Plumb but also for the EDG.<sup>1212</sup> Other British Conservative MEPs felt it was the belated acceptance of the EP as a formal institution.<sup>1213</sup> However, other European MEPs saw it as an attempt by Britain to anchor Plumb to British politics and believed that on a practical level Plumb was now part of another legislative body.<sup>1214</sup> These MEPs believed Plumb would be distracted and unable to carry out his duties as EP president effectively and considered this ‘undemocratic’.<sup>1215</sup> Plumb eased these fears by reiterating his commitment to the European Parliament.<sup>1216</sup> He emphasised that with the SEA and the nearing of the single market this was a historic moment for the European Parliament. Yet the award of the life peerage was another example of Thatcher supporting and recognising the work of MEPs such as Plumb. Plumb’s position as a Lord, leader of the EDG, and president of the European Parliament inevitably had an impact on the wider relationship between Conservatives in the European Parliament and Westminster as he struggled to balance his various commitments. The relationship/communication between MEPs and specifically with Number Ten worsened after Plumb. Moreover, Plumb also began to challenge the COM and wanted the European Parliament to play a larger role in decision-making.<sup>1217</sup> This view was not in line with Thatcher and Conservatives in London, a point of

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<sup>1211</sup> TNA, PREM, 19/216, Note on meeting with Sir Henry Plumb, 20 March 1980.

<sup>1212</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/13/8, Conservatives Leading Europe into the 1990s, 14 November 1990.

<sup>1213</sup> Michael Welsh, Diary Entry, 20 March 1987.

<sup>1214</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/2/8, EDG Bureau Meeting, 8 April 1987.

<sup>1215</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, Q, Peel, *Financial Times*, ‘The Shrewd Negotiator with a Silver Tongue’, 27 March 1987.

<sup>1216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1217</sup> Michael Welsh, Diary Entry, 20 March 1987.

similarity with Kirk in the 1970s, and all of which contributed to the worsening of relations between MEPs and Westminster.

Internally, the EDG had begun to have more disagreements following the inclusion of Spanish members.<sup>1218</sup> These were brought to the forefront in 1987 over a disagreement regarding Gibraltar and showed how Plumb struggled to balance his various commitments. Joshua Hassan, the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, was invited to a meeting in the European Parliament. However, he claimed he was humiliated when at the last moment Plumb changed the location after succumbing to threats made by Spanish EDG members.<sup>1219</sup> The initial debate started due to the division within the EDG over whether Hassan's visit should be considered official. The British Conservative contingent had wanted it to be so, but the Spanish contingent of the EDG disagreed and even threatened to leave the grouping entirely.<sup>1220</sup> The Socialists were having a similar internal dispute over the visit. British Socialist MEPs (from the Labour Party) wanted the visit to be classified as official; the Spanish disagreed.<sup>1221</sup> Thus, on this matter the split in the European Parliament was along a national rather than grouping basis. Joshua Hassan was left waiting for 35 minutes in the President's ante-chamber while the matter was discussed. It was eventually moved from the President's office and considered an unofficial meeting. After being offered a drink by Plumb, Hassan angrily stormed out, stating that he had been humiliated.<sup>1222</sup> Thus little had been achieved from this engagement with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar.

Historically, Gibraltar was a sensitive matter for both Britain and Spain as both had vested interests in the region dating as far back as 1704. Moreover, in 1985, two years previously, Spanish Foreign Minister Fernando Moran had clandestinely offered Britain a treaty that

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<sup>1218</sup> Author interview with Michael Welsh, 11 November 2016.

<sup>1219</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/2/8, EDG Bureau Meeting, 4 April 1987.

<sup>1220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1221</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, Q. Peel, *Financial Times*, 'Gibraltar Storm Breaks on European Parliament', 18 September 1987.

<sup>1222</sup> Ibid.

would re-integrate Gibraltar and Spain which was still under consideration by Britain.<sup>1223</sup> Spain and Britain would inevitably have disagreements over Gibraltar and this had extended into the European Parliament. The matter was particularly difficult for Plumb as he had to consider three areas of interest that directly affected him. Firstly, he had to consider the matter as President of the European Parliament and act in the European Parliament's best interests. Secondly, he was leader of the EDG and maintaining unity within the grouping was paramount, a role that was becoming increasingly difficult following the grouping's enlargement and consequent divergence of views amongst its members. Lastly, Plumb was a representative of the British Conservative Party, as well as being a Lord, and thus had to handle the Gibraltar matter with Britain's interest in mind. Although he had succeeded in maintaining group unity, the credibility of the European Parliament and the relationship between Plumb and Hassan were damaged, both of which were detrimental for the European Parliament and Britain. The meeting with Hassan is an example of how difficult Plumb's position had become.

The episode led to Plumb stepping down as chairman of the EDG in 1988. The potential candidates to replace him were Christopher Prout, Frederick Catherwood, Baroness Diana Elles, and the Danish member of the EDG Claus Toksvig.<sup>1224</sup> Prout won the grouping's election.<sup>1225</sup> He had been both deputy whip and then chief whip of the grouping. Taking over from Plumb would be an immense task given Plumb's prominence in the European Parliament and Westminster. Vitally, Diana Elles, who had been very important in the relationship between Thatcher and the MEP delegation, would step down as an MEP by 1989, and she would go on to work for the Belgian law firm Van Bael and Bellis.<sup>1226</sup> Her departure meant that relations between Number Ten and the delegation would worsen until

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<sup>1223</sup> See P. Gold, *Gibraltar: British or Spanish*, (London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>1224</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/2/8, EDG Bureau Meeting, 18 September 1987.

<sup>1225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1226</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, *The Telegraph*, 'Baroness Elles Obituary', 29 October 2009.

Major became Prime Minister in 1990. Yet Plumb, even after stepping down as the EDG leader, still struggled to maintain relations with Number Ten in 1988. The EDG support staff on reflection felt that MEPs became more detached from Number Ten because of Thatcher's hardening views on Europe.<sup>1227</sup>

Prout, like Plumb and Kirk, had pro-European inclinations but in 1988 many were unsure of his views on many key matters. Michael Welsh observed that Prout was 'a very very exceptional individual' and was extremely talented at building relations with Westminster.<sup>1228</sup> However, Prout was less vocal than Plumb although he was quick to voice his opinion on the single market. He sided with Thatcher in condemning the Delors Commission regarding social policy and even stated that the European Parliament should use its powers to dismiss the Commission.<sup>1229</sup> Prout argued that if more Conservative MEPs were elected in the next European elections (scheduled to take place in 1989) this was achievable, a view that was not popular amongst Spanish MEPs in the EDG as they felt that the grouping could become more sceptical about the Community in comparison to other groupings under Prout's leadership.<sup>1230</sup> As Thatcher became more critical of the Community, Prout began to mirror her views. She stated that Delors wanted a federalised European Union which was 'over the top', and Prout agreed.<sup>1231</sup> Some MEPs felt that this was an attempt by him to build relations with Number Ten,<sup>1232</sup> but his actions made it more difficult to manage the Spanish members of the EDG. Prout took charge of the EDG at a very turbulent time. The Commission was working towards a more integrated Community, which was changing the European Parliament, while domestically Thatcher was becoming more sceptical. Because of this, Prout had to balance

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<sup>1227</sup> Author interview with Anthony Teasdale, 17 March 2017.

<sup>1228</sup> Author interview with Michael Welsh, 11 November 2016.

<sup>1229</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/9/31, EDG Bureau Meeting, 7 March 1988.

<sup>1230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1231</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, P. Riddell, *Financial Times*, 'Thatcher Attacks Delors on Closer EC Integration', 28 July 1988.

<sup>1232</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner, 18 October 2016.

the needs of the European Parliament and the EDG against those of the British Conservative government which complicated his position.

After Prout took over the leadership of the EDG, the internal workings within the grouping became more complex. There was a rebellious element that did not support Prout, including Margaret Daly and Michael Welsh, due to his initial comments on the SEA as seen above.<sup>1233</sup> Amédée Turner (MEP for Suffolk) had been an MEP since 1979 and was the grouping's chief whip, and worked alongside Prout on many issues including Maastricht, and eventually the EPP merger. They worked closely together to ensure the grouping remained united. The task was made easier after the 1989 elections as the size of the grouping shrunk, although prior to this it had been difficult. The difficulties were exacerbated because most of the grouping 'completely ignored the Spaniards',<sup>1234</sup> which was at the grouping's disadvantage as 'the Spanish MEPs were very meticulous and organised'.<sup>1235</sup> On votes, the views of Spanish MEPs usually prevailed, as they had worked out exactly how each member of the grouping would vote and worked accordingly to achieve their desired result.<sup>1236</sup> This remained the case until 1989 when they decided to join to the EPP.

The EDG felt that it had to come across as a pro-European group in the upcoming European elections.<sup>1237</sup> The majority of the grouping had pro-European instincts, and this made them an independent cohort within the wider party, in spite of Thatcher's and Prout's statements in 1988. Moreover, as seen previously, Henry Plumb as leader had acted against the policies of the Conservative Party in London and other MEPs were willing to do the same.<sup>1238</sup> Tensions began to grow in this year when Plumb gave a seminar at Chatham House comparing the views of Conservative MEPs with those of the Conservative Party in London. At this seminar

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<sup>1233</sup> Author interview with Michael Welsh, 11 November 2016.

<sup>1234</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner, 18 October 2016.

<sup>1235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1237</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/4/13, 1989 European Elections, 15 September 1988.

<sup>1238</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner, 18 October 2016.

he was openly critical of Thatcher's stance on the Community.<sup>1239</sup> He stated that he did not share the view that the Community should be connected merely through individual sovereign states, and that the Community was not a centralised super-state. He spoke favourably of the completion of the single market and suggested that a European single currency was inevitable. He expressed the views of other EDG members by arguing that a stronger European Parliament would mean that MEPs could better hold other Community institutions accountable. Moreover, he criticised the Conservative government that opposed the social dimension of the Community.<sup>1240</sup> The seminar demonstrated a clear divide in opinion over the Community prior to European elections. It also damaged relations between the MEPs and Thatcher as many MEPs shared the views of Plumb.

Concerns within the party had been steadily increasing regarding the Community due to Thatcher's Bruges speech. Stephen Wall argues that Thatcher delivered the speech due to her frustrations that, despite the SEA, the CAP remained untouched.<sup>1241</sup> John Young argues that the speech defended her 'new right' approach which coupled national sovereignty and free market economics.<sup>1242</sup> Andrew Geddes correctly states that the speech 'legitimised Euroscepticism' within the Conservative Party.<sup>1243</sup> However, the Conservative MEPs completely disagreed with Thatcher, as demonstrated by Plumb's seminar at Chatham House. The former Prime Minister Edward Heath supported the MEPs and commented that Thatcher was 'misleading' the public on the direction the Community was heading, and that it was not a socialist super-state.<sup>1244</sup> Tensions continued to rise as Thatcher responded to the MEPs and Heath publicly. She stated that she had prevented the Community from falling into a

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<sup>1239</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, T. Dickson, *Financial Times*, 'Lord Plumb set to add to Tory EC', 16 May 1989.

<sup>1240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1241</sup> S. Wall, *A Stranger in Europe*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.64.

<sup>1242</sup> J.W. Young, p.156.

<sup>1243</sup> A. Geddes, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Party since 1945*, p.229.

<sup>1244</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, T. Dickson, *Financial Times*, 'Lord Plumb set to add to Tory EC', 16 May 1989.



cumbersome supranational organisation and argued that there was too much emphasis on bureaucratic procedures within the Community.<sup>1245</sup> The exchange between Heath, Plumb, and Thatcher happened five weeks prior to the European elections. It would therefore be difficult for the Conservative Party to be seen as united on Europe going into the elections. The party inevitably would lose heavily, which had a knock-on effect on how much influence Conservative MEPs had in the European Parliament. Yet the Chatham House speech and the MEPs' general response to the Bruges speech adds to the literature mentioned above as the MEPs were another group within the party that opposed Thatcher, albeit a smaller one compared to the members within her own Cabinet.

With European elections nearing, the Conservatives aimed to repair the damage done by Thatcher's Bruges speech. In their manifesto they wanted to emphasise their support for the Community.<sup>1246</sup> The manifesto stressed that the Conservative government had been instrumental in the development of the Community having secured reforms for the Community budget, and that the Conservative government wished to set the agenda for the Community.<sup>1247</sup> The manifesto attempted to balance the need for a liberal Community with a defence of British sovereignty. The Conservative MEPs did not have a large input into this election campaign. However, unlike most MEPs, Lord Plumb and Prout were consulted on the manifesto, both working on it with the Conservative Research Department.<sup>1248</sup> Other MEPs thus focused more on their constituencies.<sup>1249</sup> The build-up to the European elections exposed the internal disputes within the Conservative Party over the European Monetary System (EMS).<sup>1250</sup> Labour wanted to take advantage of the internal problems of the Conservatives through these European elections. In the build-up, it posted statements from

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<sup>1245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1246</sup> Bodleian Library, PUB 157/5 Conservative European Election Manifesto, 3 April 1989.

<sup>1247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1248</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/4/13, 1989 European Elections Manifesto report, 5 April 1989.

<sup>1249</sup> Author interview with Michael Welsh, 11 November 2016.

<sup>1250</sup> Ibid.

Heath who strongly opposed Thatcher's approach to the Community.<sup>1251</sup> Labour's manifesto focused less on the Community and more on their policy review and social justice. The policy review was established in the aftermath of the 1987 election defeat. It aimed to modernise the Labour Party and address popular issues in forthcoming elections, and the European elections were the first in which they could test how far the party had come.<sup>1252</sup> Thus, again for parties, European elections could be used to measure public opinion on specific policies.

The results of the election shocked the Conservatives as they lost thirteen seats while Labour gained thirteen. Labour now had 45 seats against the Conservatives' 32 marking the first time Labour had overtaken the Conservatives in any election since October 1974.<sup>1253</sup> The Greens had their best performance with more than two million votes. However, due to the FPTP system no Green MEP was selected. Anthony Forster has examined the 1989 European Elections, and concludes that it differed from the previous two since 'Thatcher had put her own personal stamp on the election'.<sup>1254</sup> He also suggests that Eurosceptics within the party felt that the poor performance was due to the campaign not being Eurosceptic enough, as the Conservative MEPs had worked to make the manifesto more supportive of the Community.<sup>1255</sup> Forster's account again shows the divide between Conservative MEPs and MPs over the Community in 1989. The 1989 election overall was greatly damaging for the EDG as they lost thirteen members, shrinking the size of the grouping, while Conservative MPs feared how they would fare in a general election.

The Spanish members of the EDG had become increasingly more disillusioned by the attitudes of the EDG leadership. The Popular Alliance MEPs also felt that they would benefit

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<sup>1251</sup> Ibid. European Elections analysis and polls, 18 April 1989.

<sup>1252</sup> See T. Jones, *Remaking the Labour Party: From Gaitskell to Blair*, (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 113-131.

<sup>1253</sup> Ibid, Election results, 19 June 1989.

<sup>1254</sup> A. Forster, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p.67.

<sup>1255</sup> Ibid.

from being part of a larger group.<sup>1256</sup> The EDG had been ineffective and spent much of the time attempting to develop relations with the EPP. Moreover, the Spanish MEPs disagreed with the Eurosceptic views of Thatcher, a major reason for them wishing to leave.<sup>1257</sup> In May 1989 the Spanish MEPs made it clear that they would be leaving the EDG and joining the EPP.<sup>1258</sup> The exodus was formally completed after the elections, further shrinking the size of the EDG. It meant that once more the EDG would be a non-diverse grouping and some MEPs felt that with the defection of Spanish MEPs the EDG's 'critical mass' had collapsed.<sup>1259</sup> Following the poor elections and the Spanish defection the EDG had dropped from 66 members to 34.

Christopher Prout attempted to reassure the grouping and made attempts to bridge the gap with the Gaullists. Conservative MEP Jimmy Provan had even suggested joining them.<sup>1260</sup> However, the Gaullists did not support such a move as former French President Giscard d'Estaing was heavily involved in the grouping and felt that the EDG was an incompatible partner.<sup>1261</sup> Prout then turned his attention towards the EPP. Some British Conservative MEPs had wanted to join this centre-right grouping and they had many allies in the EPP. The Conservatives in London also supported this move as they had felt that British Conservative MEPs could be more influential as part of a larger grouping. Due to this Prout was appointed as lead negotiator and opened discussions with the EPP.<sup>1262</sup> There was some support from within the EPP for the EDG to join, but Italian MEPs felt that the British Conservatives were too right-wing.<sup>1263</sup> However, some British MEPs, on an individual basis, held good working relations with EPP members and this developed due to the size and influence of the Socialist

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<sup>1256</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/2/8, EDG Bureau Meeting, 6 September 1989.

<sup>1257</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>1258</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/2/8, EDG Bureau Meeting, 12 May 1989.

<sup>1259</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>1260</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/2/8, EDG Bureau Meeting, 6 September 1989.

<sup>1261</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1263</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

grouping. Following the addition of Spanish members, the EPP still only had 122 members so a merger was potentially possible as the EPP still wished to enlarge further. Despite this, the EPP rejected the EDG and the grouping would not join until 1992 under John Major.<sup>1264</sup> The rejection of the merger by the EPP was due to the leadership of Thatcher, as well as the influence of Klepsch within the grouping, who had been unsupportive of the EDG since the 1982 EP Presidency Election.<sup>1265</sup> However, many EPP members still encouraged the EDG to continue to pursue membership.<sup>1266</sup> The episode demonstrates the impact that Thatcher's attitude was having on the EDG in 1990. Conservative MEP candidates had lost heavily in the elections, the Spanish members of the grouping had left, and, finally, the EPP had rejected their bid to merge, making it one of the most difficult periods for Conservative MEPs.

1991 began positively for the Conservative MEPs as many found it easier to work with Major, who immediately developed a collaborative working relationship with most of them.<sup>1267</sup> Many initially felt Major was more sympathetic towards the Community, and believed that he understood their predicament better than Thatcher in having to balance the needs of the European Parliament and Westminster.<sup>1268</sup> Moreover, Major wanted to support certain developments within the Community while preserving British sovereignty as seen in the Maastricht negotiations. Stephen George has observed that this would be vital as he attempted to ensure internal divisions did not split the party.<sup>1269</sup> Party management and the Community became interlinked and this was crucial as the Maastricht negotiations began. At the same time, Major supported Conservative MEPs in their further attempt to join the EPP.

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<sup>1264</sup> T. Jensen, *The European People's Party*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p.116.

<sup>1265</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>1266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1267</sup> See the Conservatives at Westminster chapter.

<sup>1268</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>1269</sup> S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain and the Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp.30-35.

With Major rather than Thatcher as leader there was renewed hope that this could happen.<sup>1270</sup> Major personally supported the move because it could give him influence in future negotiations with the Community. From an EPP perspective, they were also keen for Conservative MEPs to join and increase the grouping's size: the Socialists now had 183 MEPs against the EPP's 122. The EPP had also worked closely with British Conservatives on a number of issues and were allies.<sup>1271</sup> The likelihood of the Conservatives joining the EPP was high because of the poor performance of the Conservatives in the 1989 elections. The Conservative MEPs who were elected were all very much pro-European which made negotiating with the EPP easier.<sup>1272</sup> The majority of the EDG also supported a move to the EPP, whilst almost one-third wanted either to remain an independent grouping or join the Liberal grouping.<sup>1273</sup> There were also fewer MEPs and hence moving towards the EPP became less difficult on an administrative level.

Yet there was still an issue regarding Conservatism as an ideology. As shown by Nelsen and Guth, the EPP wanted Christian Democracy to be a cornerstone of the grouping, and this differed from both British and Danish Conservatives.<sup>1274</sup> As a result, it became clear that association status would be more likely granted to the EDG.<sup>1275</sup> The fact that EPP merger negotiations were ongoing allowed Major to go into the Maastricht negotiations being viewed as a Prime Minister more willing to engage with the Community.

Inevitably, however, because of the sheer size of the EPP there was opposition to the British Conservatives joining. The EPP was divided: German and French members were supportive,

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<sup>1270</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>1271</sup> One of the few matters where they did not work together was regarding CAP reform. In those circumstances the Socialist grouping was their allies.

<sup>1272</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/4/12, 1989 European Elections (with election literature), 1985-9.

<sup>1273</sup> CCA, CATH 243, EDG grouping relations, 5 December 1990.

<sup>1274</sup> B. Nelsen and L. Guth, 'Religion and Youth Support for the European Union', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41.1 (2003), 89-112.

<sup>1275</sup> Associate status was less than full membership and meant the EDG could keep some independence. The associate status also provided a transitional period of up to 5 years in which the EDG could become a full member of the grouping without formally applying. See B. Nelsen and L. Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union*.

while both Italian and Dutch members felt that the Conservative MEPs could not co-exist in the EPP.<sup>1276</sup> They argued that the Conservative MEPs were not willing to compromise. One official stated that the Conservative MEPs were like ‘school swots, always there always voting’.<sup>1277</sup> In this regard the Conservative grouping had more in common with the Liberals, which consisted mainly of Dutch MEPs. Moreover, the EDG had originally wanted to be an alternative centre-right grouping to the EPP, which could be achieved if they joined the Liberals. However, the Liberal grouping was smaller and had less influence. Thus, Conservative MEPs pressed on, with the support of the Conservatives in Westminster, to join the EPP.

Merger talks were led by Christopher Prout and Amédée Turner, the EDG’s chief whip and MEP for Suffolk: both had been MEPs since 1979. Initially, however, they faced problems as the EPP ‘lacked the courage to invite us [the EDG] to join’.<sup>1278</sup> Opposition was partially because of the religious divide between Britain and the EPP.<sup>1279</sup> However, Klepsch was a central concern as he still had strong influence in the EPP. Prout and Turner felt they held good relations with EPP chairman Klepsch, but believed discussions were at a stalemate. Klepsch was ambivalent due to the 1982 presidency episode. Thus, the British pair decided to seek support from the national parliaments of Continental Europe.<sup>1280</sup> They negotiated directly with Portugal and Spain and, because Turner had allies in both nations, they offered their support.<sup>1281</sup> Greece eventually offered support for a merger, particularly from members of the New Democracy Party who sat in the EPP.<sup>1282</sup> Conservative MEP Patricia Rawlings

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<sup>1276</sup> British Library, Newspaper Archive, G. Brock, *The Times*, ‘Stings in the Tales of Two cities’, 25 January 1991.

<sup>1277</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1278</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner, 18 October 2016.

<sup>1279</sup> B. Nelsen and L. Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union*, p.60.

<sup>1280</sup> Author interview with Amédée Turner, 18 October. 2016.

<sup>1281</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1282</sup> *Ibid.*

(Essex South West) also assisted by dealing with the Dutch and Italian EPP members.<sup>1283</sup>

France also remained hostile, and Britain failed to win its support. Vitally, however, Kohl was a key supporter of the merger and Germany was the most organised of the members of the EPP.<sup>1284</sup> Kohl's backing was a key factor in the eventual success.

Merger talks were still ongoing in 1992, and a meeting between Kohl, Major, and Belgian Prime Minister Wilfried Martens was held late that year. Tony Jensen has suggested that Martens was more in favour of a merger.<sup>1285</sup> Moreover, Major had also stated that he wanted to 'put the Conservatives at the heart of Europe', which had a positive impact.<sup>1286</sup> On 17 February 1992 the British Conservatives officially gained associate membership status within the EPP. Kohl's support proved to be vital. Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd quickly announced his support for the merger as Eurosceptics remained hostile towards the EPP as they felt that the EPP supported federalism. Bill Cash (Conservative MP for Stafford) stated that 'unfortunately, irrespective of what they think privately [EDG members], they have joined up with the European People's Party, the constitution of which is exclusively federal'.<sup>1287</sup> This thesis has shown that EPP and EDG historically had differences. However, due to the smaller size of EDG in 1992 the practicalities of the merger were not difficult. Some British Conservative MEPs were glad to be sitting with a traditional ally, while others remained sceptical. As seen, Prout did not involve many Conservative MEPs in the merger negotiations, relying instead on support from his inner circle (which consisted of Amédée Turner and Patricia Rawlings) and support from some of the party at Westminster. Some MEPs felt they could do more for the Community as part of a much larger group, as the issues raised would not be perceived as arising from a British-dominated quarter but rather on

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<sup>1283</sup> Author interview with Baroness Rawlings, 30 November 2016.

<sup>1284</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/4/16 International Office, EPP merger, 19 January 1991.

<sup>1285</sup> T. Jensen, *The European People's Party* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p.54.

<sup>1286</sup> CCA, British Political Speeches, John Major Heart of Europe Speech, 15 April 1991.

<sup>1287</sup> *Hansard*, HC Deb vol 215 cc168-237, 1 December 1992.

behalf of the second largest grouping of the European Parliament. Moreover, some MEPs expressed the ease with which they could discuss matters with EPP Commissioners, which many felt was important.<sup>1288</sup> Yet some EDG members were disappointed with the merger. MEPs were split on the matter as they felt there were better alternative options, including joining the Gaullists, the Liberals, or remaining independent. The matter was further complicated as this was during a time when the British Conservative government struggled to work with other member states, while the Conservative MEPs were able to work effectively with MEPs from other member states, making them an independent and separate cohort from the rest of the Conservative Party. The most significant reason why this merger attempt succeeded was because Christopher Prout intensified negotiations in November 1990 after Thatcher's resignation when there was a 'window of opportunity for the merger'.<sup>1289</sup> After the ERM crisis in September 1992 many Conservative MPs wanted the MEPs to distance themselves from the EPP. Thus, Prout was fortunate that the merger occurred when it did, as it would have been unlikely to occur after the ERM crisis. Therefore, the merger could only have occurred between November 1990 (after Thatcher's resignation) and 16 September 1992 (prior to the ERM Crisis) illustrating again that the EPP was not the natural home of the British Conservative MEPs.

Overall, this was arguably the most turbulent period for the EDG. It saw the election of Plumb as President of the European Parliament, Prout becoming chairman of the grouping, the gain and loss of Spanish MEPs, and poor European election results. However, there was some success for the Conservative MEPs as Plumb became the first and only British European Parliament president in history. There is limited literature on the EPP–EDG merger. The accounts that have examined it, such as Nelsen and Guth or Heuser and Buffet,

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<sup>1288</sup> Author interview with John Stevens, 25 March 2015.

<sup>1289</sup> Author interview with Anthony Teasdale, 17 March 2017.



all refer to religion being an obstacle for the merger.<sup>1290</sup> Tony Jensen's account goes further, emphasising the importance of the ongoing Maastricht negotiations which encouraged Major to accept a merger. Jensen also describes the pro-European nature of the EDG stating that 'Conservative MEPs understood, before their party friends in Westminster or in Central Office, that Britain's future is at the heart of Europe'.<sup>1291</sup> However, these accounts have all looked at the merger from an EPP perspective. In contrast, this chapter examines it from the perspective of the EDG. It has highlighted the importance of Prout, Turner and Rawlings in securing the merger. The chapter has also shown that opposition to the merger and tensions traditionally between the two groupings were not only due to religion, but also because of a clash in personalities, as seen with Klepsch or opposition by Italian EPP members. Most significantly, it has shown the importance of Prout acting within a window of opportunity from Thatcher's resignation on 23 November 1990 to the ERM crisis that occurred on 16 September 1992. This key intervention represents an important matter overlooked in all accounts as it shows that the EPP was not the 'natural home' of the British Conservative MEPs, and the two were only able to join due to very fortuitous circumstances.

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<sup>1290</sup> See B. Nelsen and L. Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union*. B. Heuser and C. Buffet, eds, *Haunted by History: Myths in International Relations*, (Oxford: Berghahn, 1998).

<sup>1291</sup> T. Jensen, p.116.

## Conclusion

The Conservative Party as a whole played an active role in the European Community throughout the period between 1973 and 1992, often engaging in a constructive fashion. This thesis has broadly covered three aspects of Conservative–Community relations as they pertained to the European Parliament: the relationship between Conservative MEPs and MPs; what these MEPs did in the European Parliament; and how the European Parliament developed.

As seen in section one, Heath selected the initial cohort of MEPs, many of whom shared a similar pro-European attitude to his own and wanted to work with the Community. This approach had a legacy. Many MEPs had pro-European views throughout the period considered here. The objective of these MEPs was to legitimise the European Parliament and to have positive influence in this forum. This augments the work of Crowson and his account of there being a consistent pro-European wing in the Conservative Party.<sup>1292</sup> Crowson's work tracks the evolution of British Conservative forums that discussed European matters at various points, such as the Bow Group, but he does not refer specifically to Conservative MEPs. The impact of Conservative MEPs on the overall direction of Conservative European thought is again not a contributing factor in Crowson's work. Others, such as Seldon and Ball, have also commented on the strained relations between pro and anti-European Conservatives, terming it a 'central integrating force within the party.'<sup>1293</sup> However, Richard Rose correctly points out that the divisions over Europe date further back, before

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<sup>1292</sup> N.J. Crowson, *The Conservative Party and European Integration since 1945*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p.123.

<sup>1293</sup> S. Ball., A. Seldon, *Conservative Century: The Conservative Party since 1900*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.342.

accession.<sup>1294</sup> Overlooked in these accounts are the role of the Conservative Party MEPs who were an active part of the pro-European wing of the British Conservative Party, as seen in section one, with the introduction of a new question time, or in section four when they lobbied for the SEA. In this sense the thesis examines more closely the pro-European dimension of the Conservatives, and at the same time calls for a more nuanced view of this group within the party, through considering the particular role performed by MEPs.

The thesis also enriches the literature on Thatcher's attitude towards the Community, by looking specifically at her interactions with the European Parliament and the Conservative MEPs. There has been much written on Thatcher's overall stance regarding the Community. David Reynolds suggests that she was vocal on matters that were central to British interests, making her policy no different to France and Germany, as they were 'all playing the same game'.<sup>1295</sup> In contrast, Hugo Young described her views on Europe as like 'an agnostic who still goes to Church'.<sup>1296</sup> John Young concluded that she, like Wilson, took a pragmatic approach to the Community.<sup>1297</sup> The thesis adds to these debates as none of these accounts examine the EP specifically. Through examining Thatcher's attitudes towards the European Parliament the thesis concurs with John Young's conclusion in regards to Thatcher's pragmatic approach. Thatcher worked with the MEPs on numerous important matters as seen in section three with the Haagerup report, the rebate and the SEA. Many MEPs were able to cultivate productive relations with Thatcher and Whitehall departments. During her tenure the six most significant MEPs to do so were Diana Elles, Christopher Jackson, Christopher Prout, Jim Scott-Hopkins, Peter Kirk, and Henry Plumb.<sup>1298</sup> All were able to work with Thatcher

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<sup>1294</sup> R. Rose, 'Tensions in Conservative Party Philosophy', *Political Quarterly*, 32.3 (1961) pp.275-283.

<sup>1295</sup> D. Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (London: Routledge, 2000), p.267.

<sup>1296</sup> H. Young, *One of Us*, (London: Pan Publishers, 2013), p.185.

<sup>1297</sup> J.W. Young, *Britain and European Unity 1945-92*, (New York, Macmillan, 1992), p.138.

<sup>1298</sup> It is worth noting that many interviewees held the view that Prout and Jackson held the strongest relations with Westminster and Whitehall departments. Both would go onto become MPs in the House of Commons, with Prout even becoming Shadow Lord Chancellor in 1997.

and Whitehall departments and provided a link between European Parliament committees and Westminster. Prout's and Diana Elles's efforts are described in section three: the former working on the Northern Ireland report (Political Affairs Committee) and the latter on the Rules Committee. Moreover, as seen in section four, the loss of Elles was significant as she had a vital link between MEPs and Number Ten. These MEPs were able to build relations with Ministers and senior civil servants as their committees covered policy areas that were central to the Conservative Party.

Similarly, Christopher Jackson and Scott-Hopkins were very effective and had worked on the budget committee of the European Parliament. Jackson was particularly important in the debate on the rebate as he provided a clear link between the European Parliament and Westminster. There is much literature on the rebate with some praising Thatcher, such as Patrick Cosgrave who admired Thatcher's patriotism in securing a rebate.<sup>1299</sup> Shirley Letwin considers Fontainebleau an 'impressive victory'.<sup>1300</sup> Furthermore, Stephen George sees it as significant that Thatcher also secured limits on the CAP budget.<sup>1301</sup> However, others are more sceptical regarding the extent to which the rebate represented a meaningful achievement. Economist Ali El-Agraa highlights the relatively small sum involved,<sup>1302</sup> while David Reynolds states that her policy of 'insistence on national sovereignty was unreal'.<sup>1303</sup> Hugo Young raises the most important point as he argues that Thatcher missed the chance to put her own initiatives forward for the Community by allowing the budget to dominate affairs.<sup>1304</sup> Yet Martin Dedman does suggest 'the rebate cleared the way for the SEA' which was partly

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<sup>1299</sup> P. Cosgrave, *Thatcher: the First Term*, (London: Vintage Publishing 1985), pp.27-60.

<sup>1300</sup> S. Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism*, (New York, Transaction Publishers, 1993), p.154.

<sup>1301</sup> S. George, *An Awkward Partner: Britain and the Community*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.150.

<sup>1302</sup> A. M. El-Agraa, 'Mrs Thatcher's EC Policy', in D. S. Bell, ed., *The Conservative Government, 1979-84* (London, Croom, 1985), pp.174-82.

<sup>1303</sup> D. Reynolds, p.268.

<sup>1304</sup> H. Young, *This Blessed plot from Churchill to Blair*, pp.90-100.

Thatcher's initiative.<sup>1305</sup> But the literature mentioned above does not discuss the role of the European Parliament or MEPs as it pertained to the rebate. Section three demonstrates the influence the European Parliament had on the rebate issue through its stalling of repayments. This section also shows that the Conservative MEPs, namely Scott-Hopkins and Christopher Jackson, worked consistently with Thatcher on the rebate. Lastly, the most significant contribution made by the EDG regarding the rebate was ensuring their colleagues in the European Parliament voted in favour of the supplementary budget in March 1983, which effectively concluded the rebate transaction. If this vote had not been passed, the rebate might not have been resolved until later, which could have had an impact on the upcoming election in June 1983 and subsequently a re-evaluation of Conservative policy towards the Community.

The relationship between the MEPs and MPs was also explored throughout this thesis. As seen above, the relationship between the MEPs and the leadership was broadly constructive under Heath, Thatcher and Major. However, from 1988 to 1990, some MEPs became began to act more autonomously from the Conservatives at Westminster. There has been limited literature on the communication between MEPs and national parliaments, with accounts such as Marinus Van Schendelen's suggesting that such communication has become 'scarce and exceptional'.<sup>1306</sup> However, his account focuses specifically on the Benelux states and their MEPs. The only account that discusses British MEPs and communication is David Judge's, which examines the communication between British MEPs and their constituents.<sup>1307</sup> This thesis extends these accounts as it documents the levels and formats of communication between Conservative MEPs and MPs. Towards the end of her tenure, Thatcher, more so than Heath and Major, had a difficult relationship with MEPs as she had dealt with them for the

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<sup>1305</sup> M. Dedman, *The Origins and Developments of the European 1945-95*, (London: Routledge, 1997), p.126.

<sup>1306</sup> M.P.C.M. Van Schendlen, in P. Norton, eds., *National Parliaments and the European Union*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p.61.

<sup>1307</sup> D. Judge, *Representation: Theory and Practice in Britain*, (New York: Routledge, 1999).

longest period of time and became increasingly sceptical of the Community after her Bruges speech in 1988. The relationship had worsened for three reasons. Firstly, as seen in section one, with direct elections fewer MEPs held dual mandates, and lines of communication between the European Parliament and Westminster were weakened. Secondly, the disparaging comments openly made by MPs about the European Parliament led to MEPs feeling more detached and work more autonomously from the Conservative Party MPs. One source felt that MPs ‘despised the MEPs [feeling] that Europe was undermining them’, demonstrating how detached some MEPs felt.<sup>1308</sup> Lastly, the Number Ten meeting in 1983 was damaging for some MEPs as they struggled to build relations with Thatcher afterwards. However, Thatcher did work with certain MEPs throughout this period, and Ministers such as Geoffrey Howe and John Major tried to work with MEPs to improve communications, as seen in section four. Moreover, as mentioned above, some MEPs held strong relations with Thatcher, MPs and Whitehall departments.

The relationship between MEPs and Heath, and eventually Major, was different to that between MEPs and Thatcher. Heath and Major were sympathetic towards their MEPs and made themselves accessible to them. Heath had the unique advantage of selecting his MEPs in 1973 which allowed him to pick a delegation that had a similar outlook to his own. Caroline Jackson examines the British MEPs from 1973 to 1979, and also suggests that the MEPs worked regularly with Heath.<sup>1309</sup> The Conservative MEPs and Heath maintained a collaborative relationship and even worked effectively together on the 1975 referendum, as seen in section two, which provides new empirical evidence providing more depth to Jackson’s work, particularly regarding the creation of the European Conservatives grouping. Heath’s relationship with MEPs was assisted by the fact that all MEPs held dual mandates

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<sup>1308</sup> Author interview with Lord Inglewood, 7 July 2016.

<sup>1309</sup> See: ‘The First British MEPs: Styles and Strategies’, *Contemporary European History*, 2.2 (1993), pp. 169-195.

prior to 1979. Much has been written on John Major and the Conservative Party. It is widely agreed that upon winning the leadership he had to balance the party's different wings. John Young comments that 'he had to prevent EC issues upsetting domestic politics'.<sup>1310</sup> Furthermore, Andrew Geddes explains that Major 'searched for balance' between anti-EU and pro-EU wings in the party.<sup>1311</sup> Yet no account discusses in detail the relationship between Major and the MEPs. As seen in section four, from 1990 Major enjoyed strong relations with EDG members. Many MEPs felt it easier to work with Major than it had been with Thatcher, as he made efforts to meet with the delegation. Moreover, in the Maastricht negotiations, he worked closely with the then leader of the EDG and constitutional lawyer Christopher Prout, who consulted with Major regularly.<sup>1312</sup> Section four also shows that Major was able to secure his goals in relation to the MEPs, which is an overlooked achievement of his. He was able to hold satisfactory relations with them, and effectively worked with the delegation to secure his aims at the Maastricht negotiations.

The leadership of the Conservative MEPs was vital to their relationship with Conservatives at Westminster. It also had a significant impact on what MEPs were able to achieve in the European Parliament. In this period the leaders were Peter Kirk, James Scott-Hopkins, Henry Plumb, and Christopher Prout. Kirk and Plumb were the most active and vocal. Kirk played a vital role in the decision to create a separate grouping in the European Parliament, believing that there were ideological differences with the EPP. The decision to sit separately reduced the impact of the Conservative delegation, as it remained a small entity, and had to rely on support from other groupings in votes. On a more positive note, Kirk was important in the introduction to the European Parliament of sessions modelled on Question Time in the UK Parliament.

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<sup>1310</sup> J.W Young, p.138.

<sup>1311</sup> A. Geddes, *The EU and British Politics*, (London: Palgrave, 2003), p.39.

<sup>1312</sup> Prout's role is also discussed to a small extent in the work of Anthony Forster. See A. Forster, *Britain and the Maastricht Negotiations*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 1999).

Kirk's unexpected death eventually led to Scott-Hopkins becoming the chair of the EDG and leader of the British Conservative delegation from 1979. Scott-Hopkins led the first directly elected delegation. This delegation was more divided than previously due to the appearance of the more Eurosceptical 'H bloc'. His largest failure was in running unsuccessfully in the European Parliament Presidency Election in 1983. The EDG voted against the EPP candidate Egon Klepsch, underscoring the difficult relations between the two groupings, as seen in section three. The EDG's actions in the 1982 election and the decision to sit alone contributed greatly to the lukewarm relations with the EPP. This shows that the division between the groupings was not only due to religion, as suggested by Nelsen and Guth, but instead arose from the personal relationships between the two sets of MEPs and divergence over voting.<sup>1313</sup> Hence this thesis contributes to the field by addressing internal European Parliament problems from a non-religious perspective as seen, for example, in section three. Scott-Hopkins, like Kirk, also struggled in the European Parliament due to the small size of the EDG. He failed in his attempt to expand the grouping to include Greek members. By the early 1980s the European Parliament had also developed internally with respect to how voting occurred. Groups were more willing to barter a vote in one area to secure the support of another group in another area, as seen in William Riker's account.<sup>1314</sup> Scott-Hopkins was more reserved than Kirk, Plumb and Prout. Yet his inability to expand the grouping and failed election campaign for the European Parliament presidency in 1982 led to him being replaced by Henry Plumb.

Plumb had the most significant achievements of all the MEP leaders and had better relationships with continental Europeans than Scott-Hopkins and Prout, owing in part to his farming background. Plumb took over from Scott-Hopkins in 1982. He would enlarge the

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<sup>1313</sup> B. Nelsen and J. Guth, *Religion and the Struggle for European Union*, (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2015).

<sup>1314</sup> See, W. Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).



grouping of the EDG by including Spanish members and became Britain's first and only President of the European Parliament from 1987 to 1989. His presidency was a major achievement for himself and the British Conservative MEPs. Plumb was vocal in his views and had played an active role in the 1975 referendum as seen in section two. He also, unlike Scott-Hopkins, garnered strong ties with the EPP as he had worked with many in the past during his presidency at the NFU. Plumb eventually resigned as chairman in order to focus on his role as President of the European Parliament. Hence in 1987 it was agreed that Christopher Prout would become leader of the EDG.

Prout had been in the first cohort of directly elected MEPs, with pro-European instincts like all his predecessors. He was one of the most significant MEPs as he worked on developing the European Parliament, initially as a member of the Rules Committee. Prout also led a small delegation of British Conservatives after they lost heavily in the 1989 European elections, as seen in section four. The shrinkage of the EDG was also due to the departure of Spanish MEPs. Prout oversaw the EDG–EPP merger working alongside MEPs Amédée Turner and Patricia Rawlings, as well as John Major. This merger was made easier as the Conservative MEPs elected in 1989 were all pro-European ‘down to the last man’.<sup>1315</sup> Of the literature on the merger, Heuser and Buffet correctly point to the importance of Kohl ensuring that the merger occurred.<sup>1316</sup> However, Tony Jensen focuses on the impact of the replacement of Thatcher by Major. He also suggests Major supported the merger as he felt it could assist him in Maastricht negotiations.<sup>1317</sup> Section four adds a new perspective to these accounts by discussing the window of opportunity in which Prout had to secure the merger, which was from 23 November 1990 (when Thatcher resigned) to 16 September (the date of the ERM crisis). Prior to this, the EPP would not accept the EDG due to Thatcher becoming

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<sup>1315</sup> Author interview with Peter Price, 13 July 2016.

<sup>1316</sup> B. Heuser and C. Buffet, eds, *Haunted by History: Myths in International Relations*, (Oxford: Berghahn, 1998), pp.120-170.

<sup>1317</sup> T. Jensen, *The European People's Party*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p.116.

more Eurosceptic. However, after the ERM crisis many Conservatives even suggested that the EDG leave the EPP grouping, as the party moved towards a more Eurosceptic line. Thus, a merger after the ERM crisis would have been highly unlikely. It demonstrates again that the EPP was not the natural home of the EDG, and they only merged due to fortuitous circumstances.

The European Parliament as an institution changed dramatically from one that just held budgetary powers in 1973 and much has been written on the European Parliament as an institution. Neil Nugent tracks its evolution from 1958 to 2009. He suggests that the European Parliament has areas of weakness in the period covered in this thesis and argues that the prominent constitutional weakness was the fact that the European Parliament does not need to be consulted on all areas of legislation.<sup>1318</sup> John Peterson and Michael Shackleton also suggest that the European Parliament has consistently evolved and steadily gained powers despite constant opposition by member states.<sup>1319</sup> This thesis has briefly touched on these accounts but has also shown how hostile some British MPs were towards the European Parliament, as seen by the comments made in the House of Commons regarding the European Parliament, mentioned throughout this thesis. It has also shown that even prior to the SEA, the European Parliament had influence in the period between 1979 and 1984, particularly over Community finances, as seen in section three when the European Parliament stalled Britain's rebate payment.

Section one discussed direct elections, which was one of largest achievement of the European Parliament. Much has been written on the subject, Juliet Lodge suggesting that direct elections were meant to 'erase the democratic deficit of the Community'.<sup>1320</sup> Richard Corbett

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<sup>1318</sup> N. Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, (London: Palgrave, 2015), p.320-340.

<sup>1319</sup> J. Peterson and M. Shackleton, *The Institutions of the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.124-148, also see R. Corbett, F. Jacobs, M. Shackleton, *The European Parliament*, (London, Catermill, 1999).

<sup>1320</sup> J. Lodge and V. Herman, *Direct Elections to the European Parliament*, (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp.77.

has also described the effect direct elections had on the internal workings of the European Parliament as groupings worked more closely with one another.<sup>1321</sup> As seen in section one, direct elections involved a monumental effort that required the support of all member states. Although a major achievement, from a British perspective it was less successful. Turnout for European elections has consistently remained lower than at general elections in the UK, as well as relative to other member states. Moreover, all the European elections in this period were fought primarily on domestic issues and were not Eurocentric. They became more a tool for forecasting how parties would perform in general elections. Low turnout and the comments made by certain MPs demonstrate that the European Parliament struggled to ever find a strong role in British politics.

However, direct elections did provide enhanced democratic legitimacy to the European Parliament. Furthermore, Conservative MPs were less concerned with European elections as they were not the key to holding office in the UK. The elections were instead seen as another obstacle the Conservatives as a party would have to overcome. Low turnout in European elections also gave smaller parties an opportunity to build a platform, as seen with the Greens, or later the British National Party and then UKIP. Yet a failure of the European Parliament more generally was to generate enthusiastic public engagement in European Parliament affairs, which is suggested in Corbett's account.<sup>1322</sup> The average turnout over the eight European elections in total has been 33.83%, showing a clear disconnect between the European Parliament and the British general public.<sup>1323</sup> Some MEPs that were interviewed felt that the greatest failure of the European Parliament were not being able to debunk the myth that Europe was run by bureaucrats, and not fully explaining to the public and media the role of the MEP. However, Lodge's work suggests this was not because of the MEPs, but

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<sup>1321</sup> R. Corbett, and K. Hänsch, *The European Parliament's Role in Closer EU Integration*, (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp.50-90.

<sup>1322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1323</sup> Ibid.

because the European media underreported the developments of the European Parliament, neglecting the opportunity of raising awareness.<sup>1324</sup> The British media, including TV and radio, were exceptional in their lack of coverage, due to the cost of transmitting via the European Broadcasting Union which greatly impacted the public's awareness of the European Parliament. Moreover, a by-product of the lack of coverage was, and still is, 'that politics in the European Parliament plays out in a much more brutal way than in national parliaments'.<sup>1325</sup>

Yet it was during the period from 1986 to 1992 that the European Parliament began to grow more influential, as seen in section four. This was because of the treaty ratification under the SEA (1986) and the Maastricht Treaty (1992). Both these treaties transformed the European Parliament, as many scholars have demonstrated across different national contexts. Helen Wallace argues that the SEA was vital as it embedded wider institutional changes to the Community, including an increased role for the European Parliament.<sup>1326</sup> Moreover, treaty ratification led to deeper integration, which was a traditional response to political or economic problems encountered by the Community as observed by Martin Dedman.<sup>1327</sup> Andrew Moravcsik places greater emphasises on economic problems faced by member states spurring on treaty reform.<sup>1328</sup> The SEA and Maastricht included aspects of the Vedel and Spinelli reports (discussed in sections one and three), demonstrating the importance of these reports and their long-lasting impact.<sup>1329</sup> Deeper integration tended to be the Community response to a crisis, which dated back to the OPEC oil crisis as seen in section one.

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<sup>1324</sup> J. Lodge and V. Herman, pp.130-150.

<sup>1325</sup> Author interview with Anthony Teasdale, 20 January 2017.

<sup>1326</sup> H. Wallace, *Policy-making in the European Union*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.52-71.

<sup>1327</sup> M. Dedman, *The Origins and Developments of the European 1945-95*, (London: Routledge, 1997), p.100-138.

<sup>1328</sup> A. Moravcsik, *European Union and World Politics*, (London: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>1329</sup> For a more detailed account on the Spinelli report see: A. Glencross, A. Trechsel, eds., *EU Federalism and Constitutionalism: The Legacy of Altiero Spinelli*, (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010).

The Conservative MEPs had moments of success within the European Parliament. This was mainly under Henry Plumb's tenure as EDG leader. But a core objective of being an alternative centre-right grouping ended with the EPP merger. Nevertheless, the Single European Act extended the powers of the European Parliament and, following the merger with the EPP, Conservative MEPs had a significantly enhanced Community role than in 1973. Despite the tendency to want to read backwards from the 2016 Brexit vote, and to cast the relationship between Conservatives and the European Parliament as souring over time, it is important to resist this teleological account. A close reading of the historical archives suggests that despite waxing and waning elements of collaboration and ideological alignment, the Conservative Party always regarded the European Parliament as a potential source of power and patronage. Some of their MEPs were well integrated into their national party and political power structures, in comparison to other British parties. And the European Parliament offered a realm in which Conservative politics and policies evolved and had impact, in ways which the existing literature on British Conservatism has never taken into account. This thesis thus breaks new territory in placing Europe and the European Parliament into close dialogue with British (Conservative) party politics and personnel, even as the Brexit divorce looms.

# Appendix

## 1973-79 (unelected) Delegation<sup>1330</sup>

Name	Date	Background
Sir Tufton Beamish	1973-74	Military
Earl of Bessborough	1973-79	British Diplomat
Lord Bethell	1975-79	BBC Radio Script Writer
Lord Brecon	1973-74	Former Minister of State of Welsh Affairs (1957)
John Brewis	1973-75	Barrister
John Corrie	1975-79	Farmer
Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker	1973-75	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (during Suez Canal Crisis)
Hugh Dykes	1974-75	MP Harrow East (1970 -1997)
Baroness Elles	1973-79	Barrister
Peggy Fenner	1974-75	MP Rochester and Chatham (1970-1974)
Alex Fletcher	1975-77	Businessman
Charles Fletcher-Cooke	1977-79	Barrister
James Hill	1973-75	MP Southampton Test (1970-1997)

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<sup>1330</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/1/4, Scott-Hopkins delegation report, 19 January 1979.

John Hill	1973-74	Farmer
Ralph Howel	1974-79	Farmer
Elaine Kellet-Bowman	1975-79	Barrister
Peter Kirk	1973-77	Former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for War (1963-64)
Marquess of Lothian	1973-75	Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary (1960-1962)
Earl of Mansfield	1973-75	Barrister
Tom Normanton	1973-79	Businessman
John Osborn	1975-79	Businessman
John Peel	1973-74	MP Leicester South East (1957 - 1974)
Lord Reay	1973-79	Hereditary Lord
Brandon Rhys-Williams	1973-79	MP Kensington (1968 - 1974)
Geoffrey Rippon	1977-79	Former Secretary of State for the Environment (1972-1974)
Lord St Oswald	1973-79	Military
James Scott-Hopkins	1973-79	Military
Michael Shaw	1975-79	MP Scarborough and Whitby (1966 - 1974)
James Spicer	1975-76	Military and Farming
Derek Walker-Smith	1973-79	Barrister

## 1979-1984 Delegation<sup>1331</sup>

Name	Constituency	Background
Neil Balfour	Yorkshire North	Banker
Robert Battersby	Humberside	Military
Peter Beazley	Bedfordshire South	Businessman
Lord Bethell	London North West	Historian/Translator
Beata Brookes	Wales North	Social Worker
Frederick Catherwood	Cambridgeshire	Businessman
Richard Cottrell	Bristol	Businessman
David Curry	Essex North East	Journalist
Ian Dalziel	Lothians	Businessman
John de Courcy Ling	Midlands Central	Diplomat
Basil de Ferranti	Hampshire West	Businessman
Marquess of Douro	Surrey	Hereditary Peer
Baroness Elles	Thames Valley	Barrister
Adam Fergusson	Strathclyde West	Journalist
Norvela Forster	Birmingham South	Businesswomen

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<sup>1331</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/4/6, 1979 European Elections results, 11 June 1979.



Eric Forth	Birmingham North	Management Consultant
Lord Harmar-Nicholls	Greater Manchester South	Barrister
David Harris	Cornwall & Plymouth	Businessman
Gloria Hooper	Liverpool	Barrister
William Hopper	Greater Manchester West	Royal Air Force
Brian Hord	London West	Chartered Surveyor
Paul Howell	Norfolk	Conservative Research Department
Alasdair Hutton	South of Scotland	Journalist
Christopher Jackson	Kent East	Businessman
Robert V. Jackson	Upper Thames	Political Advisor to Lord Soames (1970-74)
Stanley Johnson	Wight & Hampshire East	Author
Edward Kellett-Bowman	Lancashire East	Businessman
Elaine Kellett-Bowman	Cumbria	Barrister
John Marshall	London North	Academic
James Moorhouse	London South	Aeronautical Engineer

Robert Moreland	Staffordshire East	Management Consultant
Bill Newton Dunn	Lincolnshire	Businessman
Sir David Nicolson	London Central	Businessman
Tom Normanton	Cheshire East	Military
Lord O'Hagan	Devon	A Page to Queen Elizabeth II (1959-1961)
Ian Paisley	Northern Ireland	Protestant Evangelical Minister
Ben Patterson	Kent West	Barrister
Andrew Pearce	Cheshire West	Royal Air Force
Henry Plumb	Cotswolds	Farmer
Derek Prag	Hertfordshire	Journalist
Peter Price	Lancashire West	Barrister
Christopher Prout	Salop and Stafford	Barrister
James Provan	North East Scotland	Businessman
John Purvis	Mid Scotland and Fife	Banking
Brandon Rhys-Williams	London South East	MP Kensington (1968 - 1974)
Shelagh Roberts	London South West	Inland Revenue
James Scott-Hopkins	Hereford & Worcester	Military
Madron Seligman	Sussex West	Businessman

Dr. Alexander Sherlock	Essex South West	Medical Doctor
Richard Simmonds	Midlands West	Businessman
Anthony Simpson	Northamptonshire	Military
Tom Spencer	Derbyshire	Businessman
James Spicer	Wessex	Military and Farming
Jack Stewart-Clark	Sussex East	Businessman
John Taylor	Midlands East	Farmer
Frederick Tuckman	Leicester	Barrister
Amédée Turner	Suffolk	Barrister
Alan Tyrrell	London East	Barrister
Peter Vanneck	Cleveland	Royal Navy, Fighter Pilot, Stockbroker
Frederick Warner	Somerset	Ambassador to Japan (1970-74)
Michael Welsh	Lancashire Central	Businessman

### **1984-89 Delegation**<sup>1332</sup>

<b>Name</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Background</b>
Robert Battersby	Humberside	Military
Christopher Beazley	Cornwall & Plymouth	Businessman

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<sup>1332</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/4/12, 1984 European Election Results, 16 June 1984.

Peter Beazley	Bedfordshire South	Businessman
Lord Bethell	London North West	Historian/Translator
Beata Brookes	Wales North	Social Worker
Bryan Cassidy	Dorset East & Hampshire West	Military
Fred Catherwood	Cambridgeshire & Bedfordshire North	Businessman
Richard Cottrell	Bristol	Businessman
David Curry	Essex North East	Journalist
Margaret Daly	Somerset & Dorset West	Barrister
John de Courcy Ling	Midlands Central	Diplomat
Basil de Ferranti	Hampshire Central	Businessman
Arthur Wellesley	Surrey West	Hereditary Peer
Baroness Elles	Thames Valley	Barrister
James Elles	Oxford & Buckinghamshire	Civil Service
Sheila Faith	Cumbria & Lancashire North	Dental Surgeon
Paul Howell	Norfolk	Conservative Research Department
Alasdair Hutton	Scotland South	Military
Caroline Jackson	Wiltshire	Conservative Research Department
Christopher Jackson	Kent East	Businessman
Michael Kilby	Nottingham	Barrister

John Marshall	London North	Academic
Edward McMillan-Scott	York	Public Affairs Consultant
James Moorhouse	London South & Surrey East	Aeronautical Engineer
Bill Newton Dunn	Lincolnshire	Businessman
Tom Normanton	Cheshire East	Military
Charles Towneley Strachey	Devon	A Page to Queen Elizabeth II (1959-1961)
Ben Patterson	Kent West	Barrister
Andrew Pearce	Cheshire West	Royal Air Force
Henry Plumb	Cotswolds	Farmer
Derek Prag	Hertfordshire	Journalist
Peter Price	London South East	Barrister
Christopher Prout	Shropshire & Stafford	Barrister
James Provan	Scotland North East	Businessman
Shelagh Roberts	London South West	Inland Revenue
James Scott-Hopkins	Hereford & Worcester	Military
Madron Seligman	Sussex West	Businessman
Dr. Alexander Sherlock	Essex South West	Medical Doctor
Richard Simmonds	Wight & Hampshire East	Businessman
Anthony Simpson	Northamptonshire	Military

Jack Stewart-Clark	Sussex East	Businessman
Frederick Tuckman	Leicester	Barrister
Amédée Turner	Suffolk	Barrister
Peter Vanneck	Cleveland & Yorkshire North	Barrister
Michael Welsh	Lancashire Central	Businessman

### **1989-1994 Delegation**<sup>1333</sup>

<b>Name</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Background</b>
Robert Battersby	Humberside	Military
Christopher Beazley	Cornwall & Plymouth	Businessman
Peter Beazley	Bedfordshire South	Businessman
Lord Bethell	London North West	Historian/Translator
Beata Brookes	Wales North	Social Worker
Bryan Cassidy	Dorset East & Hampshire West	Military
Fred Catherwood	Cambridgeshire & Bedfordshire North	Businessman
Richard Cottrell	Bristol	Businessman
David Curry	Essex North East	Journalist
Margaret Daly	Somerset & Dorset West	Barrister

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<sup>1333</sup> Bodleian Library, CCO 508/4/15 1989 European Election – analysis, 15 August 1990.

John de Courcy Ling	Midlands Central	Diplomat
Basil de Ferranti	Hampshire Central	Businessman
Arthur Wellesley	Surrey West	Hereditary Peer
Baroness Elles	Thames Valley	Barrister
James Elles	Oxford & Buckinghamshire	Civil Service
Sheila Faith	Cumbria & Lancashire North	Dental Surgeon
Paul Howell	Norfolk	Conservative Research Department
Alasdair Hutton	Scotland South	Military
Caroline Jackson	Wiltshire	Conservative Research Department
Christopher Jackson	Kent East	Businessman
Michael Kilby	Nottingham	Barrister
John Marshall	London North	Academic
Edward McMillan-Scott	York	Public Affairs Consultant
James Moorhouse	London South & Surrey East	Aeronautical Engineer
Bill Newton Dunn	Lincolnshire	Businessman
Tom Normanton	Cheshire East	Military
Charles Towneley Strachey	Devon	A Page to Queen Elizabeth II (1959-1961)
Ben Patterson	Kent West	Barrister
Andrew Pearce	Cheshire West	Royal Air Force

Henry Plumb	Cotswolds	Farmer
Derek Prag	Hertfordshire	Journalist
Peter Price	London South Ea	Barrister
Christopher Prout	Shropshire & Stafford	Barrister
James Provan	Scotland North East	Businessman
Shelagh Roberts	London South West	Inland Revenue
James Scott-Hopkins	Hereford & Worcester	Military
Madron Seligman	Sussex West	Businessman
Dr. Alexander Sherlock	Essex South West	Medical Doctor
Richard Simmonds	Wight & Hampshire East	Businessman
Anthony Simpson	Northamptonshire	Military
Jack Stewart-Clark	Sussex East	Businessman
Frederick Tuckman	Leicester	Barrister
Amédée Turner	Suffolk	Barrister
Peter Vanneck	Cleveland & Yorkshire North	Barrister
Michael Welsh	Lancashire Central	Businessman



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